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JOB SEEKER'S HANDBOOK

An Introductory Guide
to Finding Work

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Contents

INTRODUCTION: READ THIS FIRST

2

GETTING READY

4

Getting Organized	4
Getting A Clear Picture	6
Finding Out Where Suitable Work Exists	19

FINDING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

25

Gathering Information	27
Your Personal Job Search Plan	35

MARKETING YOUR SKILLS

37

Portfolios	39
Application Forms	43
Résumés	45
Covering Letters	56
Curriculum Vitae	59
Proposals	60
Interviews	63

GOING THE DISTANCE

73

Handling Rejection	73
Staying Positive	76
Dealing With Job Loss	78

WRAPPING UP THE SEARCH

79

Terms of Employment	80
After You Have Reached A Decision	81

APPENDIX: Sample Résumés And Covering Letters

83

Introduction: Read This First

The new reality of the world of work

In this handbook, the terms “work” and “job” are used interchangeably to mean the new reality of the world of work. What is this new reality?

In the not too distant past, most working people were employed by a company in a position called a job. If they worked hard and performed well, they expected to be able to stay with the company for life and to be promoted up the corporate ladder.

The world of work has changed dramatically. Today, to compete globally, companies have turned increasingly to technology to perform repetitive work previously done by humans. They have cut out the middle rungs of the corporate ladder. They have turned over some of their work functions to other companies that specialize in those functions. And they have turned increasingly to temporary, part-time, and contract workers to meet their changing needs.

This means that, as a work searcher, you may run into difficulty finding a full time permanent position with one company. Increasingly, you will have greater success in finding part-time, short term, project, or contract work. You may well be working for several companies at the same time, change jobs more frequently, or be self-employed.

In the new reality of the world of work, you will need to find, and market yourself for, the work that needs doing. Contrary to many work searchers’ expectations, this work may not be packaged in a neat little bundle called “a job”.

As some types of work disappear, new ones are being created.

The changing world of work has also made it unlikely that you will stay in the same line of work for your lifetime. This does not mean that you will have to start over at the bottom every time you change occupations! Many of the skills you have developed through training and experience can be transferred to other fields of work. It takes some detective work to identify which new fields of work require skills similar to ones you already have, but it’s well worth the effort.

The most effective work search methods take time, organization and hard work.

Really effective work search methods take more time and effort than the “read the newspaper ads and send in an occasional application” approach. Job search experts recommend spending *at least* 25 hours a week on your search for work if you are currently unemployed. The more job search methods you know about and use, the sooner you will find the opportunities you are looking for!

This handbook can help you to find work in as short a time as possible. But you have to practice as well as read!

Learning how to look for work is much the same as learning any skill. First you need to know the basics, then you need practice. The best way to use this book is to read it once, and then review each section more carefully as you are actually conducting a job search.

Writing a résumé should *not* be your first step.

Before you can write a really effective résumé, you have to know:

- what skills you have to offer employers,
- what type of work you want to use them in, and
- which of your skills will interest suitable employers the most.

Building a successful job search is like building a house. If the foundation is poor, the whole structure is weakened. Therefore, following these job search steps in the order presented is strongly recommended.

1. **Get ready** by getting organized, identifying your skills, and identifying the type of work you are looking for.
2. **Find suitable work opportunities** by choosing and using the methods that suit the kind of work you are looking for, as well as your personal circumstances.
3. **Market your skills** by effectively presenting them on paper (portfolios, application forms, résumés, covering letters, business cards, brochures, proposals) and in person (interviews).
4. **Deal with job search disappointments** and maintain a positive attitude by learning from your experiences, making sure your expectations are realistic, and taking good care of yourself.
5. **Wrap up your job search** by handling offers well, negotiating salary and benefits, and letting people know you have new work.

If you have been looking for work for a while and are getting discouraged, you may want to change the order a bit by reading Chapter 4: *Going the Distance* first. If you have lost your job, the section on “Dealing With Job Loss” in Chapter 4 may be of particular interest.

The best jobs don't necessarily go to the most qualified applicants; they may go to the best job seekers.

Getting Ready

A job search is like any other kind of search. If you know what you are looking for and where to look, your search is more likely to be successful. If your approach to the search is well organized, your chances are even better. So it makes sense to get ready for a job search by:

1. getting organized,
2. having a clear picture of what kind of work you are looking for, and
3. finding out where suitable work can be found.

Getting Organized

To get organized means more than gathering supplies and equipment together. It also means organizing your time so you will be as productive as possible, and taking stock of your finances.

SET UP A WORK SEARCH “OFFICE”

If possible, find a place where you can keep your job search information and supplies all together. You need:

- a desk or table with good lighting
- supplies such as pens, paper, envelopes, this handbook, a scribbler for keeping notes, stapler, etc.
- a telephone
- access to a computer with a letter quality printer

If you don't have easy access to a computer and printer, you may be able to use one at a non-profit, public service organization, a career centre, an educational

institution, or through a friend. If this is not possible for you, consider renting a computer or typewriter, or making arrangements to have someone else type your documents for you.

Whether it's a whole room or the corner of a table, try to keep your "office" area as organized and pleasant to return to as possible.

DRAW UP A WORK SCHEDULE

If you are unemployed, you owe it to yourself to put in as many hours a week on your job search as you can. The more contacts you make and applications you submit, the sooner you will "connect" with new work.

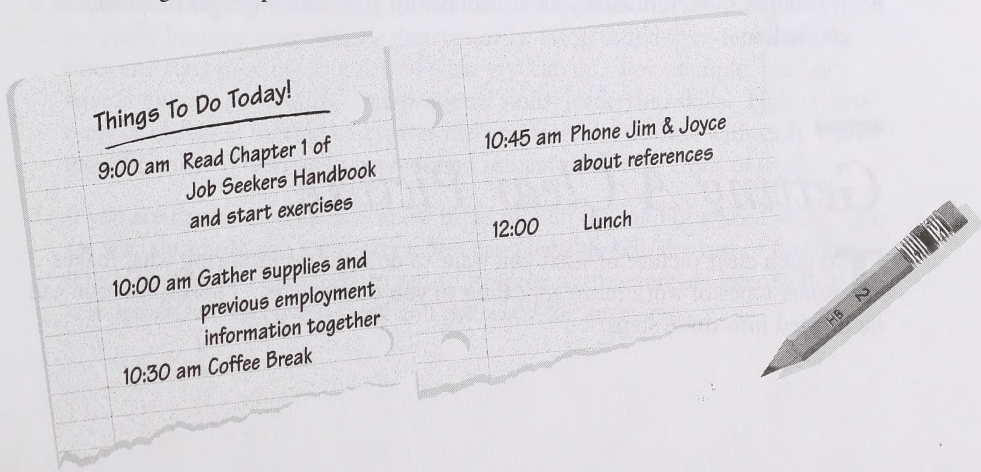
If you are employed, you may have less time available to devote to your job search. A schedule will help to keep you motivated and on track.

Organize your job search day just as you would plan any work day. You will use your time most efficiently if you:

- schedule "coffee" breaks as often as you need them to refresh yourself and keep up a steady pace,
- make lists of things you have to do and check things off as you complete them,
- do similar activities all at the same time (for example, make all of your telephone calls at one time instead of returning to the phone to make calls at various times throughout the day),
- change from one type of activity to another at regular intervals (for example, spend an hour making telephone calls, then go to the library to do some research before returning home to work on your resumé).

If people expect you to be available to do other things during your job search business hours, tell them about your schedule. Ask for their understanding and cooperation.

**Looking for
work is a full
time job.**



MAKE A FINANCIAL SURVIVAL PLAN

If you are unemployed or soon will be, there are at least three reasons for dealing with any concerns you may have about money NOW, not later.

1. Worrying about money uses up energy you can use more constructively in your search for work.
2. If employers get the feeling that you want a job only because you need the money, they are less likely to hire you.
3. You are more likely to accept work you don't really want if you are worried about money. If you don't like the work, you may be conducting another job search sooner than you otherwise might have.

Plan ahead so you won't be caught off guard by job search expenses. You will need appropriate clothing and shoes, stationery supplies and funds for things such as transportation and postage.

Prepare for the worst. In tough economic times, your job search may take months.

- Take stock of all possible sources of income: severance pay, pension fund refunds, employment insurance (EI), etc.
- If you are eligible for it, apply for EI *immediately* and fill out the forms carefully. Your first cheque will take several weeks to arrive and any problems with your forms will create a further delay.
- Consider ways to save or make money for the short term. For example, you could hold a garage sale, deliver newspapers, exchange baby-sitting or other services.
- List your expenses and see if you can cut back anywhere. Your receipts and bank statements will help you to figure out how much you are spending and on what.
- If you owe money, discuss your situation with your bank manager or a financial counsellor.

Getting A Clear Picture

To get a clear picture of what you want to do requires exploring what makes some types of work more appealing to you than others. This exploration can be divided into three steps.

STEP 1: Identify your requirements (what you need and want in a work situation).

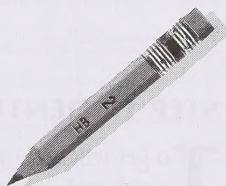
STEP 2: Identify your skills.

STEP 3: Describe what you are looking for.

On the following pages, there are several exercises designed to help you complete each of these steps.

CHECK OFF THE STATEMENTS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR THOUGHTS AT THIS POINT.

- _____ 1. *I'll take any job that I can get.*
- _____ 2. *I'm only qualified to be a (carpenter/teacher/?) so there is no point in looking for other jobs.*
- _____ 3. *I already know my skills and the kind of work I want.*
- _____ 4. *I have no idea what I want.*
- _____ 5. *I hope there is an easy test I can take that will tell me what I am best suited for.*



1. If you are thinking "I'll take *any* job," you may be selling yourself short for two reasons.
 - If you do not focus your job search on a specific type of work, you will find it very hard to sort through the possibilities. You may also settle for less than you deserve.
 - Employers won't know what kind of work you are looking for either. They need to know what type of work you want to be considered for (a labouring position, a clerical position, a supervisory position...).
2. If you are thinking "I'm a _____ and am not qualified for anything else," you are really limiting your options unnecessarily. Stop thinking in terms of job titles and start thinking in terms of what you can do. For example, teachers have communication skills, organizational skills, leadership skills. Hair stylists must be skilled at making customers feel comfortable, dealing with cash, working efficiently. These skills are required in many different kinds of work.
3. If you are thinking " I already know my skills and the kind of work I want," you are way ahead of most job seekers! You can probably skip the rest of this chapter. However, you may want to return to some of the exercises later to help you prepare an effective résumé and get ready for interviews.

4. If you are thinking “I have no idea what I want,” you are probably giving yourself less credit than you deserve. Try making a list of things you don’t want to do. Then take each item on the list and rewrite it to state what you do want. For example, if you don’t want work that requires working shifts, you might rewrite the idea to read “I want to work regular day-time hours”.
 5. If you are thinking “I hope there is an easy test I can take that will tell me what I am best suited for,” you are not alone! Most of us would like to find an easy way to get through this part of the job search. But only you can decide what types of work:
 - you find interesting
 - you do well
 - you find rewarding
 - pay well enough, and
 - are located near where you want to live.
-

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR REQUIREMENTS

To get what you want, you’ve got to know what you want. Some of your needs and desires may seem obvious to you (for example, a certain level of income). Others may take some thought to put into words.

In general, your needs and wants can be grouped into three types of requirements.

Your Interests

the subjects you like to read and talk about, and the activities you enjoy. Most people enjoy their work much more and are more productive if they find their work interesting.

Your Values

the relative importance you place on things like job security, variety, working independently, competition, status in the community, money, etc. Your work will be satisfying only if it satisfies your most important values.

Your Considerations

the limits that your personal circumstances place on your job search. For example, if you are not willing to relocate, work rotating shifts or drive your own vehicle, your work options are limited by these considerations.

List the ones you can think of right away in the appropriate columns below.

List the ones you can think of right away in the appropriate columns below.

[illegible]

9

The following three exercises can help you to identify **your interests and values**. Doing one really thoroughly may be more productive than doing all three “once over lightly” Choose the exercise(s) that appeal to you most.

Start by dividing a blank page into three columns. Label the first column with the title of the exercise you are doing. Label the second column “Interests” and the third column “Values.”

My Proudest Moments Exercise

In the first column, list several things you have done that made you feel good. They don’t have to be major achievements to anyone else, just activities that gave you a sense of accomplishment. For example, have you restored an old car and sold it for a profit? Run a successful charity fund-raiser? Decorated a room?

Try to define why these experiences stand out in your memory. For example, if you made something, what interested you about the process? List these interests in the second column.

In the third column, list all the things about your accomplishments that made you proud. For example, if you made something, were you proud because:

- you saved money?
- the quality of your work was really good?
- your creation was better than someone else’s?

Circle the interests and values you have listed that influence how appealing different types of work are to you.

MY PROUDEST MOMENTS

Made curtains

INTERESTS

- I enjoyed
- choosing fabric
 - matching colors to get color scheme.
 - visualizing how the different designs and fabrics would look in the room.
 - designing a valence (took the shape from the fabric design).

VALUES

- I am proud of
- good craftsmanship in sewing
 - creating pleasant surroundings
 - saving money without compromising professional look

My Place Exercise

Put yourself in the shoes of a guest visiting your home for the first time. What do you notice about the physical surroundings and “atmosphere” of your place? What do your observations tell you about the person who lives there?

In the first column on a new page, list the “characteristics” of your place. For example, you might note types and quantities of reading material, equipment, furnishings, artwork, clothing...and overall impressions.

In the second column, list what a guest might conclude about your interests. For example, what do your reading materials say about your interests?

In the third column, list what a guest might conclude about your values. For example, a closet full of high-fashion clothes could mean that you value material things (you decide whether it does or not in your case). A shelf of trophies might show that you value competition. A variety of reading material might show a love of learning.

Circle the interests and values you think are important for your work. You will be looking for work that involves at least some of these interests and reflect your most important values.

My Experiences Exercise

Think about your previous work experiences, both paid and unpaid. Some were probably more enjoyable than others. List the experiences you enjoyed the most in the first column on a new page.

In the second column, list what you found interesting about each experience.

In the third column, list all the things you can think of that made the work rewarding for you. For example, did the people you worked with make the difference between this experience and other less enjoyable experiences? Was it the pay, prestige or recognition...?

You may notice that similar interests and values are listed for several different experiences. Circle those interests and values - they are important requirements for your job satisfaction.

Add the items you have circled from these exercises to the lists you have already started on page 9.

For more help identifying your interests and values, look under “career planning,” “job search,” “interest inventories” or “values clarification” in the catalogue at your local library or look in the *Yellow Pages* directory under Career Planning Services.

**Which people
get work in
tight times?
Those who
know what they
can and want
to do, and
know how to
go about
getting the
work they
want.**

Once you have identified your interests and values, it's time to take **your considerations** into account. One of the easiest ways to do this is to list the phrases you would use to complete the following sentence.

I will consider only jobs that...

For example,

I will consider only jobs that

- pay at least \$ _____ a(n) hour/week/year.
- allow me to be home at certain times.
- are wheel-chair accessible.

List your considerations here.

I will consider only jobs that

**The fewer
considerations
you have, the
more work
opportunities
remain open
to you.**

For each of the considerations you have listed, ask yourself

“Is this really necessary?”

For example, do you absolutely have to have a given wage?

Are there ways you could cut back on your spending?

If you got a job that offers health care and pension benefits, would you be able to accept a lower salary?

You may have some considerations that you cannot change or modify (a physical disability, for example). However, there are usually ways to reduce or accommodate most considerations. Include only your most important considerations on the list on page 9.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

Most people have more work-related skills than they think they do. Sometimes even very well educated people see themselves as lacking in skills! Therefore, it's important to take the time to identify your skills as well as your interests, values and considerations.

In general, employers are looking for three types of skills in potential employees:

1. Technical (specialized) skills - the skills and knowledge required to perform specific duties.

For example, truck drivers, surgeons and dancers need to learn the technical skills required for their occupations.

2. Transferable skills - essential skills required to perform a variety of tasks. They can be “transferred” from one type of work to another.

For example, problem-solving skills, organization skills, and communication skills are required for many different types of work.

3. Personal (self-management) skills - describe what you are like as a person and how you do things. They include your attitudes, personality and work habits.

For example, dependability, a positive work attitude, and the ability to motivate yourself are characteristics that many employers consider very important.

To identify your technical skills, brainstorm a list of things you have learned to do through experience, in the classroom, and on the job. Your list might include activities such as:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| • operate a vehicle | • operate a cash register |
| • conduct lab experiments | • enter data on a computer |
| • sing opera | • keep financial records |
| • adjust a carburetor | • transplant seedlings |
| • cut hair | |

Complete the following sentence in as many ways as you can.

I have learned how to...

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Knowing you
have skills to
offer employers
helps build
confidence.**

Your most valuable skills are often ones that you tend to take for granted because they come easily to you. For example, you may always have been good at communicating your thoughts, organizing activities, or meeting deadlines.

There are many ways to identify these **transferable and personal skills** as well as add to your list of technical skills. Choose any combination of the following methods.

1. Get copies of your old job descriptions or list the duties you performed in past jobs, and do a "skills analysis" of each job. In other words, decide what skills were used to carry out each duty and responsibility.
2. If you did the "My Proudest Moments" or the "My Experiences" exercise, add a fourth column to list the skills you used in each experience or accomplishment.

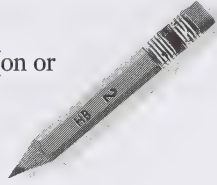
Pretend you have to explain what you did to people who won't understand unless you tell them in detail. Explain what skills you needed to use in each work experience or for each accomplishment. For example, did you have to follow written or verbal instructions, read blueprints, learn to use a tool?

MY PROUDEST MOMENTS	INTERESTS	VALUES	SKILLS
Made curtains	I enjoyed - choosing fabric - matching colors to get color scheme. - visualizing how the different designs and fabrics would look in the room. - designing a valance (took the shape from the fabric design).	I am proud of - good craftsmanship in sewing - creating pleasant surroundings - saving money without compromising professional look	- visualizing - designing - choosing complementary colors - accurate measuring - operate sewing machine - following instructions - pride in performance - efficiency

3. Ask people who know your work to help you identify your skills. Choose people who respect your work and will be honest with you.
4. Contact your nearest Career Development Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre and ask about workshops, seminars and publications that deal with skills identification.
5. Use the following checklists to help jog your memory.

CHECKLIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

1. Check off the verbs that describe something you have done (on or off the job). If you find that you are checking off most of the verbs, you may choose to skip to step two of this exercise.

**GROUP A: Communication Skills**

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> advised | <input type="checkbox"/> persuaded | <input type="checkbox"/> summarized |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communicated | <input type="checkbox"/> promoted | <input type="checkbox"/> talked |
| <input type="checkbox"/> interpreted | <input type="checkbox"/> presented | <input type="checkbox"/> translated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> negotiated | <input type="checkbox"/> read | <input type="checkbox"/> wrote |

GROUP B: Creative Skills

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> arranged | <input type="checkbox"/> developed | <input type="checkbox"/> originated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooked | <input type="checkbox"/> devised | <input type="checkbox"/> performed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> created | <input type="checkbox"/> generated | <input type="checkbox"/> produced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> demonstrated | <input type="checkbox"/> improvised | <input type="checkbox"/> predicted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> designed | <input type="checkbox"/> invented | |

GROUP C: Working With Information and Numbers Skills

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> analyzed | <input type="checkbox"/> inspected | <input type="checkbox"/> researched |
| <input type="checkbox"/> budgeted | <input type="checkbox"/> investigated | <input type="checkbox"/> reviewed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> calculated | <input type="checkbox"/> memorized | <input type="checkbox"/> scheduled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> checked | <input type="checkbox"/> ordered | <input type="checkbox"/> selected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> evaluated | <input type="checkbox"/> organized | <input type="checkbox"/> verified |

GROUP D: Leadership Skills

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> administered | <input type="checkbox"/> directed | <input type="checkbox"/> motivated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conducted | <input type="checkbox"/> facilitated | <input type="checkbox"/> planned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> controlled | <input type="checkbox"/> initiated (started) | <input type="checkbox"/> supervised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coordinated | <input type="checkbox"/> led | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decided | <input type="checkbox"/> managed | |

GROUP E: Manual and Mechanical Skills

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> adjusted | <input type="checkbox"/> installed | <input type="checkbox"/> repaired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> constructed | <input type="checkbox"/> operated | <input type="checkbox"/> serviced |

Continued on the next page

CHECKLIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS (continued)**GROUP F: Working With People Skills**

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> assisted (helped) | <input type="checkbox"/> counselled | <input type="checkbox"/> served |
| <input type="checkbox"/> consulted | <input type="checkbox"/> enforced | <input type="checkbox"/> trained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooperated | <input type="checkbox"/> instructed | |

GROUP G: Results Achieved

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> adapted | <input type="checkbox"/> proposed | <input type="checkbox"/> structured |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attained | <input type="checkbox"/> provided (furnished) | <input type="checkbox"/> submitted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> completed | <input type="checkbox"/> realized | <input type="checkbox"/> succeeded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> contributed | <input type="checkbox"/> recommended | <input type="checkbox"/> supported |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decreased (lowered) | <input type="checkbox"/> reduced (cut) | <input type="checkbox"/> transferred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doubled (tripled) | <input type="checkbox"/> revamped | <input type="checkbox"/> trouble-shot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eliminated | <input type="checkbox"/> revised | <input type="checkbox"/> uncovered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> established | <input type="checkbox"/> revitalized | <input type="checkbox"/> unified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> expanded | <input type="checkbox"/> risked | <input type="checkbox"/> upgraded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> implemented | <input type="checkbox"/> saved | <input type="checkbox"/> utilized |
| <input type="checkbox"/> improved | <input type="checkbox"/> simplified | <input type="checkbox"/> widened |
| <input type="checkbox"/> increased (raised) | <input type="checkbox"/> sold | <input type="checkbox"/> won |
| <input type="checkbox"/> introduced | <input type="checkbox"/> solved | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> stimulated | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> multiplied | <input type="checkbox"/> streamlined | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> opened | <input type="checkbox"/> strengthened | |

- Circle the verbs in Groups A to F that describe something you **enjoyed** doing.
- Ask yourself *what?/whom?* after each of the verbs you have circled in Groups A to F, and checked off in Group G.

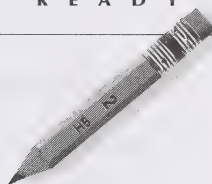
For example:

- arranged *what* for *whom*?
- motivated *whom* to do *what*?
- talked to *whom* about *what*?
- recommended *what* to *whom*?
- advised *whom* about *what*?

List your answers on a separate sheet of paper with the title “My Transferable Skills” at the top.

CHECKLIST OF PERSONAL SKILLS

The following words describe work-related characteristics.



1. Check off the ones that describe you best.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> accurate | <input type="checkbox"/> constructive | <input type="checkbox"/> humorous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> cool-headed | <input type="checkbox"/> imaginative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> independent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> alert | <input type="checkbox"/> courageous | <input type="checkbox"/> industrious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> courteous | <input type="checkbox"/> informal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> amiable | <input type="checkbox"/> creative | <input type="checkbox"/> innovative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> curious | <input type="checkbox"/> introspective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> articulate | <input type="checkbox"/> daring | <input type="checkbox"/> kind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> decisive | <input type="checkbox"/> knowledgeable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attentive | <input type="checkbox"/> dedicated | <input type="checkbox"/> light-hearted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attractive | <input type="checkbox"/> dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> logical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> broad-minded | <input type="checkbox"/> determined | <input type="checkbox"/> loving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> businesslike | <input type="checkbox"/> disciplined | <input type="checkbox"/> loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> calm | <input type="checkbox"/> discreet | <input type="checkbox"/> mature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> capable | <input type="checkbox"/> easy-going | <input type="checkbox"/> meticulous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> careful | <input type="checkbox"/> efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> modest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cautious | <input type="checkbox"/> energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> motivated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> charitable | <input type="checkbox"/> enterprising | <input type="checkbox"/> objective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> charming | <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> obliging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> open-minded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> clever | <input type="checkbox"/> forceful | <input type="checkbox"/> optimistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compassionate | <input type="checkbox"/> formal | <input type="checkbox"/> original |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competent | <input type="checkbox"/> frank | <input type="checkbox"/> organized |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> generous | <input type="checkbox"/> patient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conscientious | <input type="checkbox"/> hard-working | <input type="checkbox"/> people-oriented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> healthy | <input type="checkbox"/> perceptive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> considerate | <input type="checkbox"/> helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> persevering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> consistent | <input type="checkbox"/> honest | <input type="checkbox"/> persistent |

Continued on the next page

CHECKLIST OF PERSONAL SKILLS (continued)

___ pleasant	___ reliable	___ stable
___ positive	___ resourceful	___ steady
___ practical	___ responsible	___ supportive
___ productive	___ self-confident	___ systematic
___ progressive	___ self-reliant	___ tactful
___ prudent	___ sensitive	___ talented
___ punctual	___ sincere	___ thorough
___ quick	___ smart	___ thoughtful
___ quick-witted	___ sociable	___ tolerant
___ quiet	___ sophisticated	___ trustworthy
___ realistic	___ spontaneous	___ versatile

2. List situations in which you have shown the qualities you have chosen.

In any job search situation, your presentation of your skills will be much more effective if you:

- can describe situations in which you have already demonstrated your skills, and
- use “action words” such as those listed above to describe your skills.



Action words are words that communicate to employers what you can do. Use them when you are talking to employers, completing application forms, and writing your résumé.

Action words describe:

- *what you have done,*
- *the positive results you have achieved, and*
- *how you handle situations.*

If necessary, use a thesaurus to find the words that describe your skills and personality the best.

STEP 3: DESCRIBE WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR

The last step in getting a clear picture of the kind of work you are looking for is to organize the information from Steps 1 and 2 and write a concise description of the fields of work that would:

- satisfy your most important requirements (interests, values and considerations), **and**
- require the skills you most enjoy using.

Review your list of interests, values and considerations on page 9, and the skills you have identified. Then choose the requirements and skills that are most important to you.

In the space below, write a short description of the kind of work you are looking for. This description of **your work objective** should answer the following questions.

- What interests and values would you like to have reflected in your work?
- What are your most important considerations (if you have any)?
- What skills would you like to use and develop?

If you would like more help defining your work objective, there are a variety of sources of assistance you can turn to. Alberta Career Development Centres, Canada-Alberta Service Centres, and other non profit, public service organizations offer a variety of workshops and resources. Indeed, your local library probably has a number of books on the subject of job and work search.

Finding Out Where Suitable Work Exists

Now that you have a clear picture of what you are looking for, it's time to locate work opportunities that may satisfy your description. You have to find out:

- if such work really exists and, if so,
- what job titles are used to describe it, and
- where to find it.

This involves locating potential employers who need people with your skills and may have work that fulfills your requirements.

If your description of what you want does *not* point directly to a particular industry or field of employment, the following “telephone directory” exercise will help you to identify groups of potential employers in your area.

If your description already points to particular groups of employers, you can skip the following exercise and go directly to “Researching Fields of Employment.”

THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY Exercise

1. Glance through the *Yellow Pages* index of your telephone directory to get an overview of the categories. The index is usually located at the front or the back of the directory.

If you are also interested in government jobs and you live in a large city, use the blue pages as well. The blue pages list federal, provincial and municipal government offices.

2. Go through the listings title by title. Ask yourself the following question(s) for each title.

Am I interested in this field?

If not, move on to the next title.

If so, ask yourself the next question.

Do I need special knowledge or experience to qualify for work in this employment field?

If not, check off the title.

If you don't know, check off the title - you can find out more about the field later.

If so, ask yourself the next question.

Do I have the necessary knowledge or experience, or would I be willing to get it?

If not, move on to the next title.

If so, check off the title.

3. From the titles of employment fields that you checked off, choose the ones that look the most promising.

For a list of local employers in each field, simply turn to the page number beside the title in the index.



Notes About This Exercise

If you live in a large centre, review just a page or two of titles at one time. There are too many entries to do it all at once!

If you find you are:

- *checking off too many titles (i.e. more than 30), you can afford to be more selective.*
- *checking off very few titles and are not willing to move, you may have to be less selective.*

If you are having other difficulties with this exercise, talk to a trusted friend or counsellor about your expectations and the local employment situation.

RESEARCHING FIELDS OF EMPLOYMENT

There are basically three ways to research fields of employment: reading whatever you can find about them, searching the internet, and talking to people who have first-hand knowledge about them.

1. Reading about employment fields at a library

A lot of information about fields of employment and employers can be found in the reference, periodicals and publications sections of your local library. Business magazines, newspaper articles, placement annuals, occupational monographs and industrial directories contain a wealth of information for job seekers.

If you know very little about an industry, look first for basic information about:

- its primary products
- how products are marketed
- the level of competition in the industry
- the amount of research and development done
- what problems the industry is facing
- which companies are expanding.

**Knowledge
is empowering.
Doing the
research will
give you more
confidence.**

Introduce yourself to the reference librarian and explain what you are looking for. Most librarians are willing to help if you can describe clearly what you need to find. If a librarian is particularly helpful, remember the person's name so you can ask for him or her again. You will probably be back at the library several times during your job search.

Another good source of work search information is the Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) at your nearest Career Development Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre. Look in the phone book under Government of Alberta for the phone number of these centres. Or, call the Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753 in Alberta, 422-4266 in Edmonton, or visit www.aecd.gov.ab.ca/hotline, the Hotline website.

2. Searching the internet for information on employment fields

Excellent information on careers and employment is now available electronically. If you have access to a computer with internet service, you can do this right from home at all hours of the day and night. You can also access these computers in public libraries, cyber cafes, and the Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs) (see above). Here are some excellent Canadian and Alberta sites to get you started on your research.

DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS REFLECTS YOUR THINKING RIGHT NOW?

— *I don't like to bother others.*

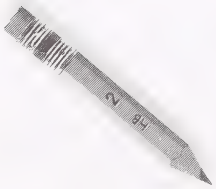
People like to help. It makes them feel good about themselves. Let people know that they can help by simply taking a few minutes to talk to you about their employment field. Most people wouldn't consider it a "bother" at all!

— *I don't know many people.*

You don't have to know many people. If you know one or two people, ask them to refer you to people they know who work in the employment fields that interest you. They may even be willing to introduce you to these people.

— *I don't like to admit that I am not working.*

The days when being unemployed meant you weren't worth hiring are long gone. Today, many valuable workers find themselves temporarily out of work through no fault of their own. Don't shut yourself off from people who can help you by providing both information and support!



Career Experience - www.careerexperience.com

Check out the pavilions at this career expo of occupations.

Canada WorkInfoNet (CanWIN) - www.workinfo.net.ca

An umbrella site, it has links to hundreds of other career related sites.

WorkSearch - www.worksearch.gc.ca

Start your self-assessment at this site in the Tours section.

Industry Canada - <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>

This site will help you to research industries and trends, especially useful if you're considering self-employment.

Occupational Information (OCCINFO) - www.aecd.gov.ab.ca/occinfo

Over 500 occupations are outlined here, including growth forecasts.

Alberta Apprenticeship Training - www.tradesecrets.org

Everything you wanted to know about an occupation in the trades.

Career Information Hotline - www.aecd.gov.ab.ca/hotline

Don't know where to go or what to do? This informative site will point you to the information you need.

Talking to
people about
their fields of
employment
takes time and
energy, and
a positive
attitude.
And it really
pays off!

ARE YOU READY TO START LOOKING FOR WORK OPPORTUNITIES?

— *Do you have a job search "office" set up?*

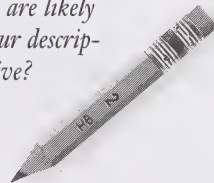
— *Have you drawn up a job search work schedule?*

— *Do you have a financial survival plan?*

— *Do you know which skills you want to use?*

— *Do you have a clear picture of what kind of work you want to do?*

— *Do you know where you are likely to find work that fits your description of your work objective?*



3. Talking to people who work in employment fields that interest you

People employed in a specific field of employment can give you information you may not be able to find in print. For example, they can tell you:

- what job titles are usually used in their industry for the type of work you want
- where the work is
- how new employees are usually hired

They can confirm what you have learned from your library research, and answer any questions your library research left unanswered.

It's a good idea to talk to more than one person so you are sure to get a balanced picture. If you know people who work in some of the fields that interest you, ask them if they would be willing to spend some time talking with you about their industry.

If you don't know anyone working in the fields that interest you, ask your friends, relatives and acquaintances to introduce you to people they know in those fields. You may also be able to get information and referrals from associations that are involved in the fields that interest you.

Tell the people you talk to that you are looking for **information**. Describe the types of jobs and employment fields that interest you. Ask them to tell you what they know about the employment fields, and to refer you to others who may know more.

Before you approach people, it would be a good idea to read the "Networking" section of the next chapter. Remember, however, that the purpose of your research at this stage is to find out where suitable types of work exist, not to find job openings.

If you research several different fields of employment **before** you start looking for specific job opportunities, you will be much better prepared to follow up suitable job leads when you find them!

Finding Work Opportunities

Finding work opportunities takes detective work. You need to find information about potential employers, and discover which ones are hiring now or might be hiring in the near future.

Finding work would be much easier if the term “job market” actually referred to a place where employers and job seekers could get together. Unfortunately, no such marketplace exists. Both job seekers and employers have to use a variety of methods to find one another.

WAYS TO FIND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways to find work opportunities. From the following list, choose the two methods you think have been proven by research to be the most effective in most circumstances. Put a #1 beside the most effective and a #2 beside the second most effective method.

- ___ Registering with private employment agencies.
- ___ Frequently checking job kiosk postings.
- ___ Hearing about work opportunities openings through personal contacts.
- ___ Contacting executive search firms.
- ___ Reading the advertisements in the Classified and Career sections of local newspapers.
- ___ Using the services of the placement office at a post-secondary education institution you have attended.
- ___ Watching for “job available” signs in the windows of local businesses.
- ___ Approaching employers directly and asking about job openings.
- ___ Paying attention to news reports about new projects, and thinking about the types of work that will be generated and where.

Recipe for job search success: work hard, work smart, and use a variety of methods to locate work possibilities.

- ___ Reading the job ads in trade magazines.
- ___ Placing “employment wanted” ads in newspapers, trade magazines or on the internet.
- ___ Searching career sites, bulletin boards, and companies’ home pages on the internet.

If you chose “hearing about work opportunities through personal contacts” as generally the most effective method and “approaching employers directly” as the second most effective method, you’re right.

Although different methods of finding work are more effective in different circumstances, research has shown that more successful job seekers have found work through personal contacts and approaching employers directly than through all the other methods combined! That’s because most employment opportunities are never advertised or posted.

Why are most work opportunities never advertised?

Put yourself in the shoes of a busy employer. If you advertise a position, you will have to spend a lot of time reading applications and interviewing people. It’s much easier to:

- *wait for a motivated job seeker to come to you, and/or*
- *ask your employees and colleagues if they know of a qualified, reliable person who is currently looking for work.*

If you can find a suitable candidate by just letting people know you are looking for someone and waiting, why bother with advertising the position?

Some opportunities may be “hidden” from you for another reason - you don’t realize that you are qualified to apply for them! Many new types of work are constantly emerging. You may have the transferable and personal skills required for some of them, and could acquire the required technical skills on the job or through short training programs. However, if you do not realize that you are qualified to apply, they are hidden opportunities.

Gathering Information

Question: *How do you find out which employers are looking for workers, and which new work opportunities you might qualify for?*

Answer: *You research work opportunities by networking and by contacting employers directly.*

NETWORKING

Networking is an organized way to make links from the people you know to the people they know. It is a process of linking contacts together to form a “net” of personal contacts who can give you support and information about job opportunities.

Through friends, acquaintances and advice-givers, you can eventually reach just about anyone you would like to meet. One person can put you in contact with several others, who can put you in contact with many more people.

Who should you talk to?

Everyone! Your hair stylist’s brother may work in an industry that interests you. Or your neighbour may know someone you should meet. The people you contact do not have to hold important positions in the employment fields that interest you.

People whose work involves a lot of contact with other people can be particularly helpful. If you know any teachers, social workers, religious leaders, or community leaders, for example, be sure to tell them about your work objective and the employment fields that interest you.

Start networking by making a list of all the people you know, and deciding which ones to contact first. The illustration on the next page will give you more ideas of who to contact.

Should you have a business card?

While talking to people, you may be asked for your telephone number or a business card so your contacts can let you know if they hear of any information useful in your search. Even while unemployed, you can have a business card! These can be printed quite inexpensively on computers using perforated business card sheets

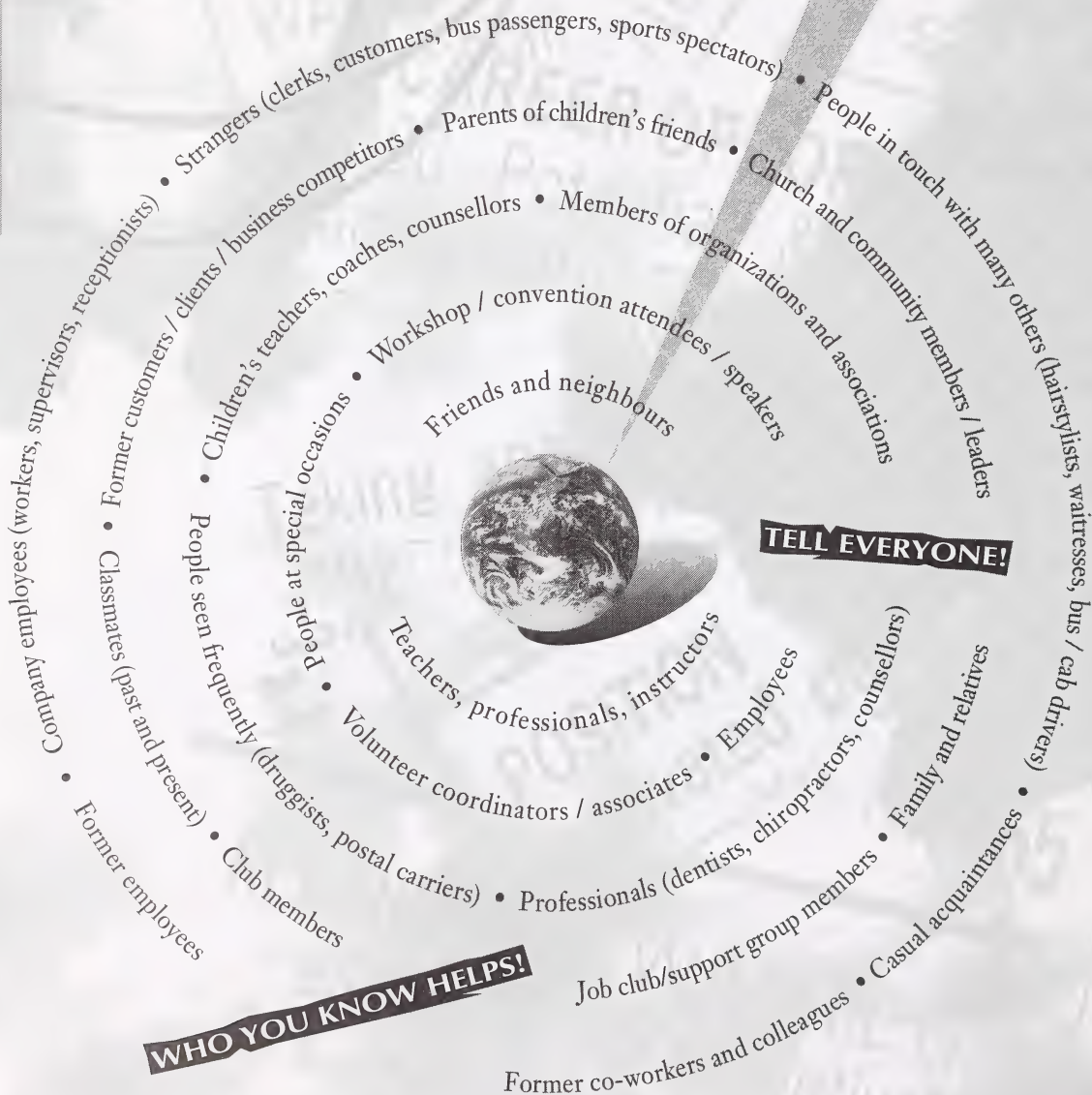
Networking is asking people for advice, information and referrals to others.

Let the whole world know

PASS THE WORD AROUND!

"PEOPLE GET PEOPLE JOBS"-

SO MEET PEOPLE!

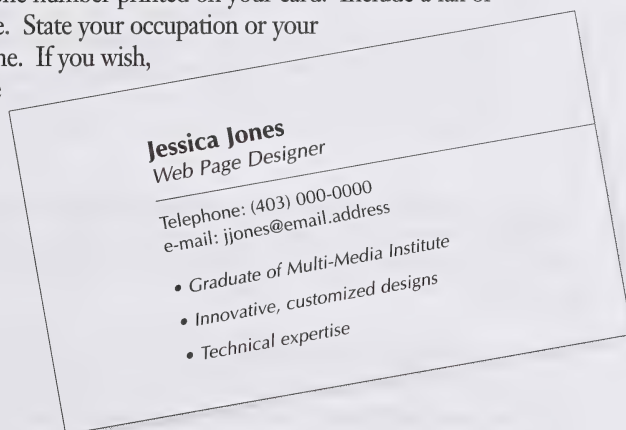


TELL EVERYONE!

purchased at office supply stores. Even better, you can get a supply printed *for* you by the same office supply company. Having them printed will not cost much more but will look more professional than the perforated cards.

Have your name and telephone number printed on your card. Include a fax or email address if you have one. State your occupation or your field of work under your name. If you wish, you may also add up to three bullets that highlight your best qualifications.

Here's an example.



How should you contact people?

Telephone or arrange to meet the people you know personally. Also, tell people you meet in the course of your daily routine about your job search. Then, depending on how confident you feel and how much time you have, you can telephone the people you are referred to or arrange to be introduced to them.

What should you say when you contact people?

When you are talking to people you know personally:

1. tell them about your job search and describe your work objective.
2. tell them how your training and experience relate to the type of work you want. (Offer to give them your résumé for more information, if that's appropriate.)
3. ask if they are aware of any suitable employment opportunities. If they don't know of any openings right now (and even if they do),
4. ask them if they would refer you to others who might know about potential job opportunities.
5. ask if they would be willing to introduce you to these people, or ask for permission to mention their name when you telephone the people they refer you to. Strangers are much more likely to receive your call warmly if you can say that someone you both know has suggested you call.

Always remember to thank your contacts for their help! A thank you note is a good idea.

When you are telephoning people you don't know, plan your call so you will be as brief and to the point as possible. Your goal is to set up a meeting with the person or at least get another referral.

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Explain who referred you, if appropriate, and why you are calling. Remember, you are looking for information, not asking for a job.
3. Ask for a short meeting.

Being
assertive means
expressing
yourself in a
straightforward
manner and
respecting
yourself as well
as others.

When people agree to meet with you, arrange for a time and place that is convenient for *them*. When people refuse your request, graciously accept their decision and ask if they would refer you to someone else. Be assertive, not aggressive.

Sometimes, the people you telephone may be willing to answer a few questions over the phone, but won't have the time to meet with you in person. Briefly describe your background and work objective, and ask if the person knows of any employers looking for someone like you. If the person does give you a lead, ask for the names and job titles of the people you should contact about it.

Remember, your purpose in networking is to meet people who can give you valuable advice and information. Some of the people you meet will be employers themselves. Interview them in the same way you would interview anyone else - **don't put employers on the spot by asking for work**. If they have any openings and you make a favourable impression, some employers may choose to turn your information interview into a job interview. If they don't have any openings and you make a favourable impression, they may be able to tell you about suitable opportunities with other employers.

What should you ask when you meet with people?

Before you meet with anyone, do some research. Then you are better prepared to get the most out of your information interviews.

Prepare for each meeting by listing the questions you want to ask. The more you learn about the work in your fields of interest, the more specific your questions will become.

Most people will have a limited amount of time to talk with you. Plan to ask your most important questions first, and make your questions as brief as possible. Be business-like and don't stay any longer than 15 to 20 minutes.

In general, ask:

1. about how the person you are interviewing got work in his or her employment field. People love to talk about themselves, so this is usually a good conversation opener. However, don't spend too much time on this or you won't have time to ask other questions!
2. for information about how new employees are usually recruited and the job search strategies that usually work best. For example, does the person recommend dropping in on employers or registering with a particular type of employment agency?
3. about the key issues and challenges currently facing the industry.
4. where a person with your background and skills might fit in their field of employment. When appropriate, ask more questions about the jobs they mention.
5. if there is someone else the person would recommend you talk to. Remember to record that person's name and telephone number.

When you have conducted a number of information interviews, it can become difficult to remember specifics like names and telephone numbers so it's a good idea to keep notes. During or immediately after each interview, write down the name of the person you talked to, the date, what you learned from the person, and the names of any referrals given. Remember to write a brief note thanking the person for his or her time and help, and send it within two or three days after the interview.

Follow up your information interviews by telephoning your contacts two or three weeks later. Your contacts may have heard about work opportunities in the meantime or thought of something else that might help you.

Look your best whenever you go out, and treat everyone you meet with courtesy.

CONTACTING EMPLOYERS DIRECTLY

There are five basic steps involved in contacting employers directly.

STEP 1: Identify Potential Employers

The *Yellow Pages* list local employers, but there are other resources available that may contain more information about them. For example, business directories offer an overview of each company as well as the address and telephone number. Some of the widely available national directories are:

- *Canadian Trade Index*
- *Canadian Key Business Directory*
- *Financial Post Surveys*
- *Fraser's Canadian Trade Directory*
- *Industry Canada's BOSS Directories*
- *Scott's Industrial Directories*
- *Western Industrial Directory*

**Tailor your
job search
plan to fit your
particular
circumstances.
The better the
fit, the more
likely you are
to find suitable
employment.**

The Blue Book of Canadian Business analyzes the roles of 130 major Canadian companies. If you are interested in working in the public sector, detailed directories may be available for the different levels of government in your area.

The nearest library, Labour Market Information Centre (located at an Alberta Career Development Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre), provincial economic development offices, or search engines on the internet, may lead you to other resources as well.

STEP 2: Choose a Method of Contacting Employers

You can contact employers in person, over the telephone, by mail or e-mail. There are several factors to consider when you are deciding which method(s) to use.

The Type of Work You Want

Employers often use different hiring practices for different types of work. They may use intermediaries such as employment agencies and campus placement offices to fill some positions, but not others.

To get work as quickly as possible, you need to know how most employers hire new employees for the type of job you want. You can find out by reading about the occupation and industry, and by networking.

Your Personality

If any method of contacting employers is generally acceptable for the type of work you want, choose the methods that present you as an applicant in the best possible light. If you usually make a good first impression when you meet people, try contacting employers in person. If you sound pleasant and confident on the telephone (or could with practice), phone employers. If you can write a dynamite business letter, apply by mail.

Your Work History

If your work history has gaps in it that are difficult to explain briefly or in a positive way, contacting employers in person or by phone is probably a better strategy than sending letters. On the other hand, if your qualifications look really good on paper, a well-written covering letter and résumé may be the most effective strategy for you.

Your Personal Circumstances

If you are applying for work in a community some distance away from where you live now, you may not be able to drop in on employers or make lots of telephone calls. You may have to rely primarily on a "letter campaign."

There are advantages and disadvantages to all three methods of contact.

Contact	Advantages	Disadvantages
in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most effective for unskilled, some semi-skilled and some sales-related jobs • impresses employers who are looking for outgoing people • favourable first impressions can be created by your appearance and manner regardless of your qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some employers resent the intrusion on their time • takes considerable self-confidence • time-consuming • may involve costs for transportation
by phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can contact many employers in a short time • harder to ignore than a letter • can be effective for most types of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires good telephone skills • only have one minute to convince an employer to talk to you
by mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasizes good qualifications • may be more practical for someone who is still employed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximum 5 to 10% rate of response from employers • not as effective in competitive fields • time-consuming • waste of time if not well written • cost of supplies and postage
by e-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates computer skills • saves cost of postage and long distance charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may not have access to e-mail service • waste of time if not well written

If this direct approach frightens you ask yourself “What is the worst that could happen?”

STEP 3: Identify the People to Contact

“To whom it may concern” is much less effective than addressing a particular person.

If you are contacting employers **in person**, call ahead of your visit and ask who has hiring authority for the type of work you want. Find out when this person may be available to speak to applicants. When you walk in, ask to speak to the person by name.

If you are making “**cold**” calls to employers (you don’t have a referral), the fastest way to find out who you should speak to is to ask the receptionist. If the receptionist is then reluctant to put your call through, you can call back another day and ask for the person by name.

If you are **writing a letter**, it is absolutely essential to address the letter to a specific individual. You may be able to find the names of company executives in local business directories or through networking if calling the receptionist is not practical.

If using e-mail, use search engines and company home pages to locate the names and e-mail addresses of the people you wish to contact.

STEP 4: Make Contact

Visit, phone or send letters. The more experienced you become at contacting employers, the easier it gets.

If you feel uncomfortable about meeting employers or talking to them on the phone, practice what you will say. Devise a one-minute “script” that sounds upbeat and is not too abrupt. State your name, describe your background and the type of position you are looking for, and ask for an interview.

Try role-playing your script with a friend. Then contact the employers that interest you the **least**. That way, you’ll be more confident by the time you get to the employers that really interest you.

Your request for an interview will be turned down many times. But, if you persist, you **will** get a number of interviews this way. Don’t give up! Keep refining your script or your letter, and contacting more employers.

Don’t overlook organizations with 20 or fewer employees. Small businesses create more new jobs than large businesses. Another advantage in contacting small organizations is that it may be easier to get through to the person who has hiring authority. Indeed, it may be the boss who answers the phone.

STEP 5: Follow Up

Follow up your contact with an employer after a reasonable length of time (about two weeks). Be gently persistent.

If you meet employers **in person** and they state that they have no current openings, leave a résumé or your name and telephone number anyway. Ask when it would be appropriate to check in with them again.

On the telephone, your objective is to arrange a time to meet with the employer. At the end of these meetings, leave a résumé (if appropriate) and ask if it would be acceptable to call back in a couple of weeks.

In the closing paragraph of a **letter**, ask for an interview. If possible, give a date and time that you will telephone the employer to arrange a convenient time. Then be sure to call when you said you would!

The more work search methods you use, the faster you will find employment.

Your Personal Work Search Plan

Most work opportunities are found in the hidden job market so your job search plan should include both networking and some type of direct contact with employers. Your choice of other job search methods should be based on your knowledge of how most employers recruit to the type of work you want.

Which work search methods will you use?

Check off the job search methods in the following list that you think will be the most effective for you.

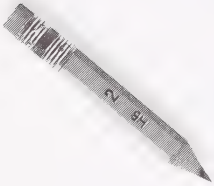
- ☐ Networking.
- ☐ Contacting employers in person.
- ☐ Contacting employers by telephone.
- ☐ Contacting employers by mail.
- ☐ Answering job ads.



Continued on the next page

Which work search methods will you use? *(continued)*

- ____ Using the services of the placement office at a post-secondary institution you have attended.
- ____ Joining a “job club” or some other support network for job seekers.
- ____ Contacting employers by e-mail
- ____ Registering with employment agencies
- ____ Registering with electronic job matching services, such as the Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE) at www.ele-spe.org
- ____ Frequently checking job postings on kiosks at Alberta Career Development Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centres, which are also available on the internet at <http://jobbank.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/>
- ____ Using creative methods of attracting attention such as sending telegrams or designing your résumé to look like a brochure or a business card.
- ____ Other method(s) listed below.



Which job search method will you devote the most time to? Put a #1 beside that method.

Which one is next important? Put a #2 next to it. Continue to assign a priority to each of the methods you have chosen.

The time you spend on different job search activities each day should reflect the priorities you have set.

For example, if networking is the method you marked with an #1, then a major part of your job search day should be spent networking.

If necessary, modify the work schedule you developed in Chapter 1.

Marketing Your Skills

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Communicating effectively is a skill, just as operating a piece of equipment is a skill.



Communicating your skills is much like designing an advertising campaign. You have to:

- be familiar with the product (your skills)
- identify potential buyers (employers who might want to hire someone with your skills)
- design a campaign that will appeal to those employers.

Portfolios, application forms, résumés, covering letters, and proposals are the “marketing tools” of your campaign. They should present all the advantages that hiring you would bring to an employer.

Your marketing tools must create a positive impression of your skills. Both content and “packaging” are very important. In a work search, the packaging most often is your résumé and covering letter, or application form. Other packaging that is becoming more common are career portfolios and short-form proposals. If your documents look well-organized and interesting, employers will at least start to read them. Quality content will keep them reading.

Your application should reflect both the type of work you are applying for and your personality.

If you are applying for work in a conservative industry like banking, your application should follow all the standard guidelines for application forms, covering letters and résumés. However, if you are applying for work in a creative industry like advertising, your application might be more effective if its format illustrates your creative abilities.

A résumé you write yourself is bound to reflect your personality better than a résumé written for you by a friend or a résumé service. Employers see many standard-looking résumés. If you can create a unique style that is informative, interesting and draws attention to your strongest skills, your résumé will certainly stand out.

As your job search progresses, keep improving your tools.

Take note of what seems to impress employers and what does not. Learn from your mistakes, and keep working on improving your presentation of your skills.

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

When employers are recruiting new employees, they are looking for evidence that applicants have

- the transferable skills required
- the technical skills required (if any), and
- the personal skills required to be productive and get along with co-workers and customers.

Most employers are looking for the following personal skills, especially when they are recruiting for entry-level positions.

1. Dependability
2. Good attitude toward work
3. Ability to motivate self
4. Integrity
5. Personal initiative
6. Commitment to employer
7. Ability to work well with others

One of the most effective ways to communicate to employers that you have the skills they are looking for is to describe situations in which you have already demonstrated those skills.

For example, describing situations in which you have demonstrated personal initiative is much more effective than simply stating that you are a self-starter.

Your presentation of your skills will be even more powerful if you can describe the results you have achieved.

For example, describe how other people's behaviour changed as a result of your efforts to motivate them, or tell employers that you received an award for a good attendance record or a good safety record. Better yet, show them samples from your career portfolio.

Career Portfolios

A career portfolio is a collection of samples of your work (paid and volunteer), your education and training, and your hobbies and interests. Think of it as a cookbook, a collection of recipes. You may have recipes for main courses, appetizers, and desserts in your cookbook. You would not use each recipe in the book each time you plan a menu, but rather select those appropriate for the occasion. It's useful, however, to have a collection from which to choose. Career portfolios are used in the same way.

Portfolios have traditionally been used in creative occupations to showcase an individual's work. Photographers have portfolios of the best photographs that demonstrate their techniques and accomplishments, writers have samples of their articles, poems or stories, crafters have photograph albums displaying the objects they have designed and produced, and radio and television journalists have audio and videotapes of interviews they have done or programs they have hosted.

Portfolios are expanding to other occupations. New teachers, for example, may provide potential employers with an essay outlining why they chose to enter the teaching profession, and their philosophy and teaching style; copies of transcripts, certificates, diplomas, or degrees; sample lesson plans; practicum evaluations; and supporting letters from supervising teachers, students and their parents. They may include photographs of a creative classroom display or of students working on an innovative project. All of these are intended to provide evidence of the applicant's teaching style and competencies.

You and many others could be working temporary assignments, on contract, or as self-employed workers. Since assignments and contracts can change quickly, it is easy to forget all you've done. For you, a career portfolio is an invaluable tool to keep track of everything you're involved with and to make effective presentations for new contracts.

CREATE YOUR OWN CAREER PORTFOLIO

No matter what occupation you are in or wish to pursue, you can create your own portfolio to market your skills and accomplishments. Doing this project will accomplish a number of things:

- remind you of the things you have learned, the skills you have and your accomplishments. This, in turn, will help increase your confidence in marketing yourself.

A career portfolio is an invaluable tool to keep track of everything you're involved with and to make effective presentations for new contracts.

- provide evidence of your own competencies
- get you ready to write your résumé
- help prepare you for job interviews
- be a home for materials which can also be used for personal and professional development, prior learning assessment for post-secondary courses, scholarship and award applications, and certification and licensing for some professions.

THREE STEPS FOR CREATING A CAREER PORTFOLIO

Chances are, you already have the beginnings of a portfolio in a folder or shoebox somewhere. If you do not have one now, it is never too late to start. Here's how.

1. Collect items about yourself

A career portfolio is a collection of samples of your work, your education and training; and your interests including volunteer work. It may include:

- certificates and awards, records of employment and evaluations, letters of commendation, nomination, or thank-you
- contracts you've held
- newspaper or magazine articles about you, or quoting you
- work samples you created such as training materials, manuals, procedures
- safety records, sales figures, marketing plans, spreadsheets, technical drawings
- projects you have participated in or self-managed
- posters, brochures or flyers of events you worked on
- computer disk of a program you developed
- desk-top published items
- slide show or multimedia presentations showing a process or equipment
- actual items that can be handled, or photographs or models of these items.

The list is endless. The important thing is to start collecting these samples, if you have not already done so.

2. Organize your materials

No collection of materials is useful until it is organized. One idea is to place your documents in a three-ring binder with dividers separating categories. In our cookbook example, the categories may be soups, salads, casseroles, and squares. In your career portfolio, the categories may be technical, transferable or personal skills; or they may be knowledge of specific industries, education and continuous learning, community involvement; or any other categories that make sense for your particular collection.

To protect your documents, you may choose to place them in plastic sleeves that you can buy at office supply stores. You can also have documents and photographs copied, enlarged, shrunk, laminated or scanned onto a page. You can be as creative as you like in the display and organization of your collection. Let your imagination and your budget be your guide.

3. Select materials from your portfolio

Rarely would you use your whole portfolio to show to a potential employer. The trick is to select appropriate and relevant items for your purpose. You could create a mini-portfolio or a portfolio-résumé hybrid (from your master portfolio) targeted to a specific field of work. Employers find portfolios most useful if an item you show them demonstrates a skill needed for the work you are applying for. If, for example, that work requires well-developed computer skills, you might select from your portfolio a report you produced that integrated graphics or charts in a word-processed document. This concrete evidence of your skills can give you an edge over other candidates being considered.

QUALITY IS IMPORTANT

If you're going to show items from your portfolio to potential employers, you want to be able to impress them with the quality of your samples, your organization, and your presentation.

If you do not have time to do a quality job on your portfolio, you'd be better off to leave it at home for now. Keep adding to your collection. The process of building this collection for yourself is as valuable as using it in your work search.

HOW TO USE YOUR PORTFOLIO IN AN INTERVIEW

Review your portfolio before going to an interview. It will remind you of stories you can tell that demonstrate the relevant skills you want to emphasize and will identify the samples you wish to show and talk about to the interviewers. These selected materials can become your work portfolio, targeted to the specific company and type of work you are being interviewed for. Don't forget employers are not only interested in your technical skills, but also want to know about your transferable and self-management skills.

Carry your portfolio with you to an interview. After all, the "port" part of the folio suggests that it is portable. Not every employer is going to want to take the time to view your whole portfolio, but you will impress many with the quality of the samples you select to illustrate your points and the time, energy, and skills that went into the illustrated project.

Limit yourself to present those samples that are relevant to the question being asked. And don't just read the material. Talk about it. Practice your stories and presentation before you go. Friends and relatives can provide useful feedback.

Don't fall into the trap of complaining about difficulties you encountered in your sample project. Instead, focus on the problem solving, adaptability, team work, and other relevant skills you used to successfully do the work.

Portfolios are still relatively new in Canada, so don't be surprised at employers' mixed reactions. At best they may be impressed enough to offer you work! At worst, they may be disinterested or not have the time to view it just now. You could offer to leave the portfolio for them to look at later. Do not leave your original documents, however, only photocopies. When you return to pick up your portfolio, you can use the opportunity to discuss it and leave a thank you note. Quite possibly, this could lead to work at a later time. People are more likely to remember what they have seen than what they have just heard about.

Application Forms

Some employers require that you complete an application form even if you have a résumé. They find it easier to compare your qualifications to those of other applicants if everyone has completed the same form.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION FORMS

1. **Take a copy of your résumé with you** when you are applying for work. If you don't have a résumé, take a list of your former employers, the educational institutions you have attended, and your references. When you have to fill out an application form, you can copy names, addresses, telephone numbers, and start/finish dates instead of relying on your memory.
2. **Ask for two copies of the application form** and, if possible, take them home. Then you can take as much time as you need to fill out the form neatly and correctly. Use the second copy if you need to redo the application to improve it.
3. **Bring your own good quality pens** in case you can't take the forms home. Using erasable pens makes correcting errors much easier and neater.
4. **Read the instructions** on application forms carefully. If a question does not apply to you, put a dash in the blank or write N/A for "not applicable." Don't use "lazy" responses like "see résumé."
5. **Be honest.** It's almost impossible to repair the damage if you are caught in a lie. If your response to a question might be seen as a reason not to interview you, you can write "will explain in the interview" or counterbalance the negative aspects of your answer with more positive information. You can attach a sheet of paper if you need more room.
6. **Be specific** about the type of job you are applying for. If necessary, ask the receptionist for the correct position title.
7. **List your most recent employer first** and work back when you are completing the work experience section of the form. Include start and finish dates, names of companies, job titles and duties, and the positive contributions you made while you worked for that employer.
8. **Write something positive sounding** such as "left to pursue other opportunities" in a "Reason For Leaving Past Employment" section. If you say something negative about a former employer or something such as "personal reasons," recruiters may get the impression that you have a bad attitude or are not reliable.

Fill out every application form as carefully and completely as you do the first one.

9. **In the education and training area of the form, list** the dates you attended, the names of schools, and the certificates or diplomas you earned. If you have taken training courses or have earned special awards that relate to the work you are applying for, list them as well.
10. **Fill in the “Additional Comments” section** if there is one. It’s the one place on the form where you can expand on the unique combination of skills and interests you would bring to the work environment.
11. **Don’t put down an expected salary figure** unless you are sure of the standard salary range for this type of work. State that you are “open to negotiation.”
12. **If you can show samples of your work, bring a portfolio** with you. However, don’t attach copies of your marks, performance appraisals or letters of recommendation to your application form unless you are asked to do so. All of your important qualifications should be outlined on the application form - don’t expect employers to read through attachments to find them.

YOUR RIGHTS

In Alberta, **The Individual’s Rights Protection Act** prohibits employers from asking job applicants

- for information specific to gender or marital status (your plans for marriage or child care, for example)
- for maiden name, “Christian” name or reference to the origin of your name
- for age or date of birth
- for place of birth, or racial origin
- for height or weight
- for a photograph (it would reveal race, gender, etc.)
- about memberships that would indicate race, religious beliefs, ancestry or place of origin
- about present or previous health problems, Workers Compensation claims, or any absence due to stress or mental illness
- about citizenship other than Canadian, or languages not required for the position
- about military service outside of Canada
- for previous addresses outside of Canada.

Employers are allowed to ask applicants about their availability for shift work, travel, etc. and ability to fulfil other job-related requirements such as heavy lifting. They can also ask for the name used in previous employment or education to do reference checks. In general, employers are permitted to ask questions related to the requirements of the job, not questions related solely to your personal history.

If an application form includes a request for inappropriate information, you can react in one of three ways.

1. Fill in the requested information, even though you know the request may be illegal.
2. Put a dash in the blank or write N /A and run the risk of annoying the employer.
3. Send a copy of the application form to the Human Rights Commission, and lodge a complaint.

It's your decision.

Résumés

When you are applying for most types of work, employers will expect you to have a résumé, a one or two-page summary of your qualifications. A résumé is one of the components of your career portfolio.

The purpose of a résumé is to draw an employer's attention to your most significant skills and accomplishments. It is a marketing tool designed to get you invited for an interview. **It should be short, visually appealing and easy to read.**

Many books have been written about how to write an effective résumé. Unfortunately, the advice given is not always the same. Different authors sometimes have different opinions about how a résumé should look and the information it should contain.

For example, many authors emphasize the need for a "job objective" statement at the beginning of your résumé that describes the type of work you want and your strongest qualification(s) for it. Leaving it out, they say, could imply that you don't know what you want. Other authors argue that you don't need a job objective statement because your goal is obvious or can be stated in a covering letter.

**Effective
résumés take
work ... and get
results.**

In the end, you have to use your own judgement about what will market **your** skills most effectively for the type of work you want. If you are uncertain, write a draft résumé. Then show it to people who work in your target industry, and an employment counsellor or two. Ask them to suggest improvements and accept their comments without argument. Chances are, you will get a variety of opinions. Then make up your own mind!

Despite the controversy surrounding some aspects of résumé-writing, the following basic steps are widely accepted.

Writing your own résumé helps you to prepare for interviews. It requires you to take stock of your skills so you will know what to emphasize in an interview.

THE FIVE STEPS OF RÉSUMÉ WRITING

Writing an effective résumé is a process of gathering information together, choosing the information that is most relevant to your objective, selecting a résumé format, putting a draft résumé together, and editing your draft until it is as impressive as you can make it.

STEP 1:

The first step is to **gather facts** about your employment and education history, and do some work on identifying your skills and accomplishments. If you have already completed some of the exercises in Chapter 1, or started collecting materials for your career portfolio, you are much better prepared to write a résumé than most job seekers!

Create a “fact sheet” by listing the following facts about your employment and education history:

- the names, addresses and telephone numbers of former employers, dates of employment and names of supervisors.
- job titles, descriptions of duties, a list of your skills and situations in which you have demonstrated those skills.
- the names and addresses of education/training institutions you have attended, the program(s) you completed, major areas of study or training, and any awards or recognitions you received.
- volunteer experience, hobbies, other activities and memberships that show you have knowledge or experience related to the type of work you want, or show that you have positive characteristics such as personal initiative.
- the names, addresses and telephone numbers of your references.
Whenever possible, your references should be people who have supervised your work.

STEP 2:

The second step is to **decide which qualifications you should emphasize** for the type of work you want.

Your strongest qualifications should be listed closest to the beginning of your résumé. For example, most experienced workers list work history first, then education and training. However, if you don't have much experience that relates to your work objective, you may choose to list your education and training first.

STEP 3:

The third step is to **choose a résumé format**. There are basically four types of résumé formats to choose from.

- **Chronological** - lists past work experience in chronological order from most recent to least recent.
- **Functional** - lists skills without saying where or when you used them.
- **Combination** - lists both skills and employment history.
- **Electronic** - lists key words in noun form in an uncluttered format to be "read" by electronic scanners

Each résumé format has advantages and disadvantages. Purely functional résumés may be appropriate in some circumstances, but studies consistently reveal that most employers view them with suspicion. Therefore, only chronological, combination, and electronic formats are discussed further here.

The more your résumé shows the results you've achieved, the more likely you will be considered for a job.

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Chronological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most widely used • logical flow makes it easy to read • highlights a steady employment record • emphasizes growth and development in employment history • easier to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposes drawbacks such as gaps in employment, frequent job changes, lack of related experience or lack of career progress • highlights most recent employment, not skills

Continued on the next page

Continued From page 47

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Combination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlights most relevant skills and accomplishments • minimizes drawbacks such as gaps in employment and lack of directly related experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be confusing if not well written • downplays experience with specific employers • harder to prepare
Electronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your résumé will be retrieved from the employer data base for any positions in which your qualifications match the employer's requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to rewrite résumé and change its format

MORE ON ELECTRONIC RÉSUMÉS

There are times when your résumé needs to be in a format that can be easily scanned into an electronic résumé tracking system. Larger corporations (and smaller ones using third party résumé handlers) are increasingly turning to this method of recruitment and selection because, once the system is installed, it saves them an incredible amount of time.

An electronic résumé tracking system allows an operator to scan your résumé for storage into the company's résumé databank. In some cases, emailed résumés go directly into this bank. Your résumé is retrieved when key words that describe the qualifications the company wants for a position match key words on your résumé.

It is imperative that you do two things to ensure your résumé will be retrieved if you have the appropriate qualifications:

- Send your résumé in plain text format.
- Use key words in noun format. The vocabulary used in the applicant tracking system is in noun form.

Tips for Plain Text Format

Some of these tips do not apply to all scanners and applicant tracking systems, but unless you know the specific requirements of an employer's system, play it safe and follow them.

- Use sans serif (no cross-lines) typeface such as Univers and Helvetica
- Use preferably 11-14 point font and definitely nothing smaller than 10
- Avoid underlining text, scrunching text, italics, boxes, and shading
- Use only your name as the first line of the résumé
- Use a laser printer and black print on white paper

Tips for Key Word Résumés

You can incorporate key word nouns in the body of your résumé or write a key word summary. If you use a key word summary:

- Start with a summary that focuses on your job target
- Use keyword nouns to describe your qualifications. Start with field of work.
- Place most important and relevant information first
- Use the body of the résumé to support the keyword summary
- Use industry jargon and abbreviations
- State your qualifications in as many different ways as you can think of, varying terms in the summary and the body of the résumé

See the Appendix for examples of chronological, combination, and electronic résumés, including Tracey's chronological résumé converted to an electronic chronological one with plain formatting.

STEP 4:

The fourth step in preparing a résumé is to **write a draft**. The following tips summarize commonly accepted advice.

Tips for Preparing Résumés

1. **Keep it simple and clear** - one page, two pages at most.
2. **Emphasize your accomplishments and achievements.** Wherever possible, describe how your work benefited your former employers.

3. **Avoid the pronoun “I” and inexpressive words** such as “I was responsible for...” or “My duties involved...” Use “action” words to describe your work (see the skills checklists in Chapter 1 for examples of action words).
4. **Be honest.** Don’t exaggerate or misrepresent yourself - most employers check information. On the other hand, don’t sell yourself short by being humble.
5. **Type your résumé** on good quality, white or off-white, standard business-size bond. Add to the clean, professional look of your résumé by using wide margins and listing things in point form to create lots of “white space” on the page. Use boldface type and/or underlining to highlight information.
6. **Make sure there are no errors** in spelling, grammar or typing.
7. **List a telephone number** where you can be reached during the day. Or, list two telephone numbers, one where messages can be left during the day and an evening number.
8. **Don’t sign or date your résumé**, or put the title “résumé” at the top.

STEP 5:

The fifth step is to **edit, edit, edit**. Then edit some more until your skills are represented as concisely and dynamically as possible. Use a minimum number of words, but avoid using abbreviations.

Before you prepare the final copy, ask as many people as possible to give you feedback on your most recent draft. You need to find out if your résumé gives a clear and appealing picture of your best qualifications.

When you have a résumé drafted, ask yourself (and the people you show your drafts to) the following questions.

- ___ Is it attractive and easy to read?
- ___ Do key points and headings stand out?
- ___ Is it concise (no unnecessary words or sentences)?
- ___ Is all the information relevant and positive?
- ___ Does every statement emphasize a skill or ability?
- ___ Does every item begin with an action verb?
- ___ Are there any errors in spelling or grammar?

STEP 6:

The sixth step is to get your résumé and covering letter to the employer. You have several choices here:

- hand deliver it
- mail it
- fax it
- e-mail it

When e-mailing, it is probably safest to send it as part of the e-mail message or in a text-only attachment, although you will sacrifice all formatting. Or you can send it as an attached file (check first if your program is compatible with the employer's).

In all cases, follow up with the employer to make sure your résumé was received. You can also send a hard, clean copy in regular mail after you have faxed or e-mailed a plain text résumé. It doesn't hurt for your résumé to be reviewed more than once, or by different people, and the hard copy will make better photocopies for a review panel.

Remember to keep a copy of your résumé for future reference. When you have found work, update your portfolio and résumé regularly so you won't forget about some of your accomplishments.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF RÉSUMÉ FORMATS

In the following illustrations of a chronological and a combination format, some items are optional. You can choose to include them or not in your résumé, depending on your particular circumstances.

For example, list job titles if they tell readers that your experience is directly related to the type of work you are applying for. If they don't highlight the skills you want to emphasize in your résumé, leave them out.

Likewise, if readers may not be familiar with the location of your previous employers, include the name of the community and province. If readers are probably familiar with the employers you list, you can leave the addresses out.

For samples of "real" résumés, see the Appendix on page 83 or consult the books about résumé writing at your local library.

ILLUSTRATION OF A CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Your Full Name

Your Street Address or Box Number
Community, Province
Postal Code
(Area code) Telephone number

Objective:

Describe the type of work you are seeking and your most relevant qualification (optional section).

Experience:

19XX- 19XX

Position Title (optional)

Company Name of Your Most Recent Employer

Name of Community, Province (optional)

- what you did in this job that required similar skills to those you would need in the job you are applying for.
- your accomplishments such as a measured increase in productivity, evidence of improved community relations, commendations from clients or customers.
- start each item with an action verb. For example, "participated in establishing..." instead of "responsible for helping to set up..."

19XX-19XX

Position Title (optional)

Company Name of Your Second-Last Employer

Name of Community, Province (optional)

- responsibilities, duties and accomplishments most relevant to your objective.
- list other duties and responsibilities very briefly.

19XX-19XX

Position Title (optional)

Company Name

Community, Province (optional)

- skills, duties, responsibilities and accomplishments.
- shorter descriptions of experience that is less relevant to your objective.

2

Education

19XX - 19XX

Name of Educational Institution
Community, Province
Diploma, certificate or degree earned and
major fields of study or training.

Summer, 19XX

Include short education, training and professional development courses that relate to your objective as well.

Other Activities/Skills/Interests/Community Involvement

Create a title for this section that reflects the additional information you want to include. It could be:

- volunteer experience and hobbies, particularly those that relate to the type of work you are applying for.
- recognitions or awards you have received that provide evidence of strong personal skills and/or good citizenship.
- interests you hold in common with many people in the type of work you are applying for.
- skills not already mentioned that relate to the job (for example, you are bilingual).
- memberships in professional organizations.

If this information includes some of your strongest qualifications for the position, you can change the name of this section to "Skills" or "Highlights of Qualifications" or something else appropriate and put it at the beginning of your résumé.

References: Available upon request.

ILLUSTRATION OF A COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

YOUR NAME

Street Address or Box Number
Community, Province, Postal Code

(Area Code) Telephone Number
Alternate Telephone Number

OBJECTIVE:

Describe the type of work you are seeking and your most relevant qualification (optional section).

EXPERIENCE

Skill Title

- group your skills under two or three (no more than five) skill titles such as "Community Relations," "Customer Service," or "Project Management."
- the skill titles you use should reflect the types of skills required for your objective.

Skill Title

- concisely describe how you have demonstrated each type of skill and where.
- for the skill title "Organizational Skills," for example, say what you have organized and how, and the results you have achieved for particular employers.
- start each item with an action verb.

Skill Title

- avoid self-evaluations. For the skill title "Writing Skills," for example, replace "developed excellent resource materials" with "developed well-received resource materials." Even better, state how many copies were sold or distributed, or any recognitions you received for your writing.

WORK HISTORY

- Position title for a phrase describing the type of work you did, name of employer, address (optional), and dates of employment.
- List the name of your employer first if it is more impressive than your position title.
- Or, put the dates of employment in the left margin as you would in a chronological résumé.

EDUCATION

- List your high school or post-secondary education, the names and locations of the institutions you attended, and the dates you attended.
- Highlight diplomas, licences, etc. and any other awards or recognitions.
- Include other relevant training such as short courses or training received for volunteer work.

INTERESTS/ACTIVITIES/MEMBERSHIPS

- Create a title that fits your circumstances, and include information that gives the reader an idea of your personal strengths and involvements.
- If you think it would be advantageous, include information such as "excellent health" under the title "Personal" or "Personal Data."
- Or, you can leave this section out altogether.

REFERENCES: Available upon request.

YOUR REFERENCES

Your choice of whom to name as a reference is very important. Most employers check references, especially when they are seriously considering hiring someone.

Many employers like to see the names, position titles, addresses and telephone numbers of three to five references listed on a résumé. However, listing references on your résumé has two possible disadvantages.

1. Listing references may make your résumé appear too long.
2. Your references may not appreciate getting a lot of calls if you distribute your résumé to many employers.

An alternative to listing your references on your résumé is to have a typed list ready for employers who ask for them. Remember to put your name on it too if your references are listed on a separate sheet of paper.

Always ask your references for permission to use their names. Tell them about the type of work you will be applying for and describe the skills you want to emphasize. Ask them directly if they feel comfortable about recommending your work. If they don't feel comfortable about it, they can't give you a strong recommendation.

It's a good idea to give your references a copy of your résumé and point out how your qualifications relate to your work objective. The better informed your references are, the better prepared they are to answer questions when employers call them.

Covering Letters

A covering letter is a business-like way to introduce your résumé or application form when you are applying for a job by mail. If you have never met the employer, your covering letter will create that all-important first impression of your qualifications.

To be most effective, your letter must:

- get the employer's attention and keep it,
- appeal to the employer's interests and needs,
- highlight your skills and accomplishments,

- provide information that is relevant to the particular job you are applying for, and
- convince the employer to read your résumé or application form.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A COVERING LETTER

- **Make it brief and to the point.** Your letter should be short, and typewritten on good quality paper - a standard business-style letter. Use simple and direct language.
- **Link yourself to the employer** by naming your referral if possible (for example, Joe Davis, your Manager of Customer Service, suggested I write to you). If you are responding to a newspaper advertisement, refer to the ad. Show your awareness of the types of things the company is doing and its objectives.
- **“Personalize” your letter.** It should reflect your personality. However, be careful to avoid appearing pushy, overbearing or too familiar. This is a business letter so humour is generally out of place here.
- **Tailor your letter to the requirements of the job.** It must show how your skills relate to this particular employer’s needs. Photocopies and “form” letters are not acceptable.
- **Stress how the employer will benefit** from hiring you, and how you think you will benefit by becoming a part of the company. It’s important to anticipate the reader’s questions and give the answers. Don’t make it hard to see where you would fit in.
- **Mention that you are available at the employer’s convenience** for an interview or to discuss opportunities, and give a telephone number where you can be reached during the day.
- **Check the letter carefully** for any spelling, punctuation, grammar, or typing errors. Ask a friend to check it too if you are not sure.

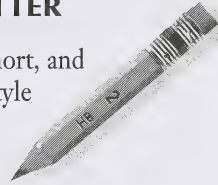


Illustration of a Covering Letter

An illustration of what a typical covering letter might look like is included on the following page.

ILLUSTRATION OF A COVERING LETTER

Return Address
Community, Province
Postal Code
Date

Employer's Name
Position Title
Company' Name
Street Address or Box Number
Community, Province
Postal Code

Dear Mr./Ms.: (preferably not Sir/Madam)

Tell the reader that you are interested in this job and why. Let the reader know that you are familiar with the organization and its operations, but get right to the point. If appropriate, state how you heard about the job opportunity.

Explain why you are applying for this position or type of work. Point out any key experience (including volunteer or school-related) that qualifies you for the position. Keep your paragraphs short.

Describe any other important work history. State that a résumé or application is enclosed for more information. Offer to provide additional information, if needed.

Request an interview. If appropriate, let the reader know you will be checking back to set up an appointment.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Encl.

Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae (vee-tie) or CV (see-vee) is a longer, more comprehensive version of a résumé, which literally means summary. Not as common as the résumé, Curriculum vitae are used primarily in academic and international circles. This is how résumés and curriculum vitae contrast.

Résumé

- Generally 1-2 pages long
- Summary of relevant qualifications
- Used in most fields of work
- Used to quickly screen candidates

Curriculum Vitae

- 3-4 and up to 10 pages long
- Comprehensive listing of relevant qualifications
- Used for academic and international positions
- Used to study credentials and biographical information

If a curriculum vitae is more than four pages long, an executive summary should be attached as well. This consideration will be appreciated by anyone receiving the longer document.

CONTENT

Some of the information contained in an academic curriculum vitae is the same as an international curriculum vitae. But there are differences as well.

Both types of curriculum vitae need to include contact information; objective; summary of qualifications; summary of skills; education, including degrees, specialization, doctoral dissertation; professional background, including job titles and employers; research; publications; public presentations and appearances; honors, awards, distinctions and achievements; and professional affiliations. Be specific with names, titles, places, and dates.

In addition, international curriculum vitae require personal information considered to be discriminatory in Canada (age and marital status) as well as personal attributes, citing work-related examples and quotes from employers, co-workers, customers and people with status and authority (such as clergy and political officials); volunteer and public service experience; hobbies and leisure activities. Add "excellent health" to your personal information if this is true for you. The aim always is to show yourself in a positive light and as a person flexible and adaptable to a new culture. Have your curriculum vitae translated to the language of the receiving country if English is not a language used there.

Proposals

In the introduction, you read that work does not always come packaged in a ready-made job. In your networking and discussions with employers, you may be asked to consider taking on a project on a contract basis. This usually means submitting a proposal, putting in writing your concept of the project and what your fees would be.

THREE TYPES OF PROPOSALS

Letter Confirming a Verbal Agreement

You and the company have discussed and verbally agreed to proceed with a project. You need to follow up with a letter that outlines what was agreed to, to confirm the details of the arrangement. “This letter confirms our agreement to...”

Solicited Proposal

You submit a written proposal in response to either a written or verbal request for proposals (rfp) from a company. Other contractors will probably send proposals as well. The proposal could be in letter format, or on a separate page or two with a covering letter. The following content should be included in your proposal:

- introductory paragraph stating the background and need for the project
- the objectives of the project
- a description of the work to be done
- a brief outline of your expertise and qualifications for this project
- when the project will begin, deadlines for each step, and when it will be completed
- expenses to be paid by the company (if any)
- total fees to be paid to you by the company
- your name and contact information (use your own letterhead, if you have it)

The proposal, if accepted, would then be followed by a separate written contract. Sometimes the proposal becomes the contract when both parties sign it.

Unsolicited Proposal

You may decide to submit an unsolicited proposal if, in your discussions with employers, you uncover a need or a challenge that a company faces for which you can provide a solution. In this way, you can create a work opportunity for yourself. Your proposal can be written in the form of a one or two page letter and should include the following items:

- A reference to your previous discussions with background information
- A statement of the company's problem or need and the results it desires
- Your suggestions for a course of action
- Your special qualifications (skills, experience) for the action you propose
- When the project can begin and when it will be completed
- Your fees
- An offer to meet with the company to follow up on the proposal. Tell them when you will contact them for this purpose.

One thing to be careful with in the unsolicited proposal, is to not provide all the details of your course of action, as there is a danger the company can take your great ideas and either do the project themselves or give the contract to someone else.

The chances of an unsolicited proposal being accepted are much lower than a solicited one unless you have established a solid contact with the company, have discussed the issues with them, and have determined they would be receptive to a proposal from you.

HOW TO WRITE A WINNING PROPOSAL

Remember that a proposal, like a résumé and covering letter, is an opportunity to market your skills and make a good impression. Review the checklist for writing a covering letter, and apply the same criteria to writing your proposal. Deliver your proposal, mail, e-mail, or fax it to the company. Enclose your business card and a brochure of your business, if you have these.

Illustration of a proposal: Proposal For Project X for XYZ Company

Introductory paragraph stating this is in response to a request for a proposal for the name of the project. You can refer here to the need that prompted the request for the proposal and the objectives of the project. Or you can place the objectives in a separate category.

Objectives

- In point form list the objectives of the project as you understand them
- Do not add new objectives that were not discussed
- Start each item with an action verb preceded by the word "to", for example, "to develop a training session"

In uncomplicated proposals, the objectives and the description of the work could be the same.

Description of the Work to be Done

Explain and describe exactly what you will do.

- Be specific so that no misunderstandings occur
- Use names and numbers
- Be sure you can deliver what you say you will do

These descriptions will become your contract or will be quoted in your contract. You will no doubt refer to these while you are working on your contract as a reminder of what you agreed to deliver.

Outline of Your Qualifications

- Keep these relevant to the project
- Be clear and concise
- Use highlights of your qualifications only - this is where you wow them with your expertise

(This section will not be necessary if this is a letter confirming a verbal agreement.)

Timelines

- State when you can begin the project
- State when you will complete the project
- State what deadlines, if any, will be in place for various steps of the project

Fees

- Indicate if fees are to be a flat fee or an hourly fee
- Indicate if fees are to be paid in one lump sum at the end of the project, or paid in part as different steps in the project are completed
- Separate fees and expenses
- Outline what the company will pay for (materials, photocopying etc.)
- Don't forget travel, meal or accommodation costs, if applicable

If you're not sure what to charge, ask what kind of a budget the company has in mind, or ask people who have done similar contracts or projects for some guidelines.

Contact Information

- Be sure to include your name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable
- Sign the letter accompanying the proposal, or the actual proposal, if it is in letter format

Interviews

A job interview may be for full-time, part-time, temporary, or contract work, not necessarily a permanent position. Whatever the case may be, the word “job” is used to mean all types of work and employment.

A job interview is a business meeting in which both you and the employer are contemplating making a mutually-beneficial deal. You have skills the employer needs, and the employer has work that you want. Your first task is to show the employer that you have the technical, transferable and personal skills the employer is looking for. Your second task is to find out if you are interested in what the employer is offering. In other words, you should be prepared to ask questions about the job as well as answer questions about your qualifications for it.

Treat each job interview as an opportunity to learn something and improve your interview skills.

Interviewers vary in their abilities to conduct job interviews. Skilled interviewers are good at putting you at ease, and getting down to the business of discovering what you have to offer each other. Not-so-skilled interviewers may ramble or bluster to cover their discomfort. In that case, you may have to guide the conversation yourself to ensure that the interviewer gets a clear picture of how your skills fit the requirements of the job.

BEFORE INTERVIEWS

When an employer or a receptionist calls to set up a job interview with you, ask what **type** of interview you should expect. Will there be one interviewer or several? Will it be a screening interview to determine whether you will be interviewed more seriously later? Or, will it be a selection interview following which a job offer might be made?

You can also politely ask the employer or receptionist for

- directions and parking instructions,
- the name(s) and position title(s) of the interviewer(s), and
- a copy of the job description.

If you are applying for a job in another centre, an employer may want to interview you via a long distance telephone call. Arrange to receive the call where you can speak comfortably. Have your résumé, a pen and some paper, and a list of questions with you when you answer the call.

Realistic expectations and thorough preparation are the keys to reducing anxiety and doing well in a job interview.

CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO TO PREPARE FOR JOB INTERVIEWS



- **1. Review your résumé and the information** you have gathered about the company and the position. Put yourself in the employer's shoes. Given the duties and responsibilities of the position, what qualifications would you be looking for in potential employees?

Look for clues about what the employer is looking for in the wording of the job description or the job advertisement. Then identify the things you have done that show you have those skills.

If you have not already researched the job and the employer, do so! For help, see Chapter 2.

- **2. Anticipate potential interview questions and prepare your answers.**

This is particularly important for the questions you hope the employer won't ask! If there are negative aspects in your work or personal history, think about how you can present the positive side. For example, if you made a mistake, be prepared to briefly admit it and quickly move on to explaining what you have learned from it.

Interviewers may be reluctant to ask about sensitive areas such as your appearance or your personal background. You can mention them yourself if you think the employer may see something (for example, a physical disability) as a potential problem. When you explain why it would not be a problem, the employer is not left in doubt.

Review the sample interview questions in the following section. Prepare answers that respond to the underlying question as well as the stated question.

Practice your answers in front of a mirror or with a tape recorder, or get a friend to role play an interview situation with you. If at all possible, videotape your role play. Then you can work on improving both the verbal and the nonverbal messages you send. Your posture, facial expressions and gestures should communicate positive things too.

- **3. Prepare your questions.**

What do you want to know about the job and the organization? Review the exercises you did on considerations, interests and values in Chapter 1. You may want to ask questions about how much travel would be involved,

the company's goals and objectives, the working conditions, the people you would be working with, etc.

Be sure to word your questions tactfully. Leave questions about salary and benefits until the end of the interview. Better yet, wait until you have been offered the job to discuss this subject.

- **4. Ensure a business-like first impression** by selecting what you will wear and planning ahead so you will get to the interview on time. You must be well groomed and your clothing neat and clean. Dress the way you expect the interviewer to dress.

If you are not sure how long it will take to get from your home to the interview location, make a test run. When you are there, take note of how the people working there are dressed.

Allow extra travel time in case something unexpected happens. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early, rested and alert.

- **5. Allow plenty of time for the interview.** For any number of reasons, the interview may take longer than you expect it to. Don't box yourself in by planning to meet someone in an hour or by parking at a limited time meter, for example.

POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

No matter how irrelevant or ridiculous an interview question may sound, it generally has a purpose behind it. For example, interviewers may ask questions such as "If you could be an animal, which animal would you choose to be?" They aren't really interested in what animal you choose, they want to see how you handle an unexpected situation.

Most interview questions can be grouped into five categories.

1. Questions About You and Your Skills

Sample Questions:

- Tell me (us) about yourself?*
- What do you consider your most important abilities?*
- What are your strengths?*
- What are your weaknesses?*
- Why should we hire you?*
- What five words would you say describe you best?*
- Have you had any experience in this type of work?*

The key to effectively answering a job interview question is to understand the purpose of the question.

The employer wants to know what makes you different from other applicants, and how well your qualifications match the requirements of the job.

Describe your skills and abilities, and how they relate to the job you are being interviewed for. Emphasize the appropriate aspects of your background, experience, accomplishments, and characteristics.

For example, if you know the job requires patience (to deal with dissatisfied customers) or persistence (to solve problems), focus on those characteristics and describe situations in which you have demonstrated them.

2. Questions About Your Interest in the Job and the Company

Sample Questions:

What is it about our services or products that interests you?

What is your understanding of the nature of the job and the company?

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for our company?

Why did you apply for this job?

The employer is trying to find out what you know about the job and the company, and if you understand the organization. You will certainly stand out from other applicants if you can answer this type of question well! This is where your research on the company and the job really pays off.

Summarize what you know about the company and its operations. **Tell the employer that what you are looking for in a job seems to be what this company is offering.** Emphasize again how your skills would meet the company's needs.

3. Questions About Previous Employment

Sample Questions:

Why did you leave your last job? or, why do you want to leave your present job?

Why were you fired?

What was your last employer's opinion of you?

What is your opinion of your boss/previous employer?

The interviewer is fishing to find out if you were incompetent or had problems with previous employers. If you have had problems, the interviewer may become concerned that you would have similar problems in this job.

Focus on the positive - your desire to learn new skills, assume more responsibility, seek new opportunities, grow and develop. If there is something negative

about your work history, acknowledge the facts briefly, then describe any circumstances or the behaviour of others that were beyond your control. If you were responsible for being fired, tell the interviewer about the positive things you learned from the experience.

Avoid getting emotional. Don't apologize or make negative remarks about salary, overtime, former employers or co-workers.

4. Questions About Your Commitment to the Job

Sample Questions:

- What are your long range goals?*
- Are you thinking of going back to school or to college?*
- Why have you changed jobs so many times?*
- Don't you think you are over-qualified for this job?*

The employer wants to know if you are prepared to stick around. Talk about your career plans, but show that this job is not just a short stopping point to your long-range goals. Mention the challenge of the position and its relation to your career plans. **Let the employer know you won't quit after a short time.**

If you have changed jobs many times, explain why you felt it was necessary and emphasize that you expect to stay longer in this job (if that's true).

If you are over-qualified for the position, stress your adaptability and flexibility, and your willingness to assume more responsibility.

5. Questions About Your Ability to Fulfil Specific Requirements

Sample Questions:

- How do you react to instructions and criticism?*
- Would you be prepared to relocate? take retraining?*
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?*
- Can you work under pressure?*
- Do you like routine work?*
- What kind of boss do you prefer?*
- What salary are you looking for?*

If the interviewer asks about your preferences or ability to cope with certain types of situations, the job probably involves those situations.

Answer the question tactfully and honestly. Talk about your willingness to fulfil the job requirements and give examples of your ability, if it's the truth. But

if you don't like routine work, would not be willing to relocate, say so. There is no point in being offered work if it would not satisfy your requirements and you would not accept it.

The **salary question** requires special attention. If possible, avoid discussing salary until a job offer has been made. You are in a much stronger negotiating position then. If the interviewer persists and you know the typical salary range for this type of position, you can mention a figure that is reasonable for someone with your qualifications. Let the employer know that you would be open to negotiation depending upon the benefits offered.

If you don't know the typical salary range, say that you would like to research the pay and benefits for similar jobs before you commit yourself to a figure.

HANDLING INTERVIEWS

Having a general idea of what to expect in an interview goes a long way to improving your confidence. Well-run interviews flow through three stages:

1. a short introductory stage,
2. an exchange of information stage in which both you and the interviewer ask and answer questions, and
3. a "closing" stage that wraps up the interview.

Creating A Good First Impression

Most interviewers "size up" an applicant in the first three minutes of the interview. The rest of the interview serves primarily to confirm a positive or negative impression. If the first impression is negative, you have an uphill battle to turn that impression around. Therefore, pay particular attention to how you will appear to the interviewer when you first arrive.

Do your best to observe the following guidelines for creating a good first impression in a job interview.

1. Arrive about 10 minutes early, and briefly let the receptionist know that you have arrived.
2. Try to smile and appear confident. If you have to wait a few minutes, use the time to calm yourself and observe the office dynamics.
3. If other job applicants are waiting in the reception area too, and you imagine that they all have better qualifications than you do, **DON'T GIVE UP.**

Remember that employers are looking for appropriate transferable and personal skills as well as technical (specialized) skills. You may have just the combination the employer is looking for.

4. Don't smoke, chew gum, or drink coffee, and try not to fidget.
5. Be pleasant, honest, and sincere with everyone in the office. The employer may ask other staff members for their opinions.
6. When you first meet the interviewer(s), introduce yourself, shake hands firmly, and make eye contact.
7. Remain standing until you are offered a chair, then sit up straight.
8. Follow the interviewer's lead. You can spend a few moments making small talk about the weather, traffic or some interesting object in the room, but be prepared to move quickly into the main part of the interview when the interviewer is ready to do so.

Exchanging Information

When you get to the main part of the interview, take every opportunity to expand on your skills, knowledge, and achievements. Emphasize what you can contribute to the organization. Avoid mentioning your needs until after a job offer is made.

1. Point out connections between your capabilities and the employer's needs that you might consider obvious. For example, your related experience should shorten the length of time the employer has to spend training you.
2. Avoid "yes" and "no" answers. Answer the employer's underlying concern as well as the stated question.
3. Follow the interviewer's lead. If the interview seems quite "structured" (each applicant is asked the same questions in the same order regardless of their answers), it's generally best to save **your** questions until the end.

If the interviewer asks more "open" types of questions (for example, "Why are you interested in this position?") and bases the next question on your answer, you will have more opportunities to ask questions and to lead the conversation to a discussion of your strongest qualifications.

4. Show your interest in the job through your body language (posture, facial expressions and movements) and by asking informed questions. Listen carefully to the answers.

5. If you don't understand a question, respond with something like "I'm sorry, I'm not sure what you mean." If you don't know the answer, say so.
6. Take the time you need to think about your answers to difficult questions. Don't think out loud.
7. Agree cheerfully with any requests to fill out application forms or furnish references.
8. If you get the impression that the interview is not going well, don't let your feelings show. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by continuing to appear confident.
9. If the employer raises an objection such as "you've been out of the work force a long time" or "you've always worked in the same setting," deal with the employer's concern directly. Explain why it would not be a problem. For example, tell the employer how you have kept up to date, or draw the employer's attention to how the skills you developed in your previous jobs relate to this job.
10. If you are asked an illegal question, you have to decide how to deal with it. You can answer the question, or tactfully ask the interviewer to explain how the question relates to the job you are being interviewed for.

Closing the Interview

Near the end of the interview, your interviewer should tell you about the process used for selecting the successful candidate, and how long it will probably take. Summarize your skills, state that you are very interested in the position (if you still are), and ask any remaining questions you have about the position.

If you are comfortable doing so, ask if it would be acceptable for you to call the interviewer and, if so, when you should call. You can explain that you are very busy and would hate to miss the interviewer's call.

Thank the interviewer(s) for the time and consideration, shake hands, and leave promptly in a positive manner.

AFTER INTERVIEWS

Regardless of the outcome of an interview, it's a good idea to write a brief letter of thanks for the interviewer's time and consideration. It sets you apart from other applicants, and can serve to remind the interviewer of you and your strongest qualifications. You can also use your letter to supply additional information.

A hand-written letter or note is acceptable if your writing is easy to read. Write the letter while the interview is still fresh in your mind.



Notes About Body Language

Your mannerisms, gestures, body movements, posture, tone of voice, and expressions communicate just as much as your words do.

For example, the position of your body while you are speaking and listening says a lot about how interested you are. Slouching or being too laid-back destroys a positive image, so sit up straight or lean forward slightly in your chair.

The cultural background of the interviewer(s) will determine how your body language is interpreted.

Eye contact is a good example. In some cultures, making eye contact is considered disrespectful. However, most Canadian interviewers will think you are trying to hide something if you don't make eye contact in a job interview.

Watch the interviewer's body language for clues about how well you are doing.

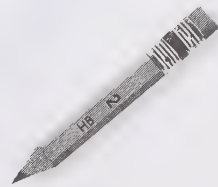
If the interviewer appears confused, ask if he or she would like you to explain something further.

If the interviewer looks bored, change gears and show more energy, or take the hint that the interview is near an end.

There are many excellent books on how to improve your communication skills. For more information, look under "communication," "communication, nonverbal" or "job interview" at your local library or nearest LMIC.

Learn from each interview by asking yourself the following questions afterward.

- 1. Did the interviewer ask questions that I was not prepared for?
- 2. Did I forget to ask anything about the job or company?
- 3. Did I emphasize the connection between my skills and the skills required for the job?



- ___ 4. Was I pleasant, honest and sincere?
- ___ 5. Did I answer the interviewer's underlying concerns as well as the questions asked?
- ___ 6. Did I address the employer's concerns in a positive way?
- ___ 7. Did I sum up my skills, then leave promptly and politely at the end of the interview?

Take note of what you want to do differently next time.

Don't be too hard on yourself. You will get better with practice!

In a notebook, briefly record your impressions of the interview as well as your recommendations for improvement in future interviews. Include reminders of what was discussed, names, salary figures and anything else you might need to remember if you are offered the job.

If you promised to call the interviewer on a certain date, make sure to put a reminder on your calendar. If the employer said you should expect a call by a certain date, note the date on your calendar and call the employer if you have not heard anything by then.

No matter how well your interview went, don't let up on your job search efforts until you have a job offer in hand. Keep on finding work opportunities and following them up!

Going The Distance

A positive attitude is extremely important both for your mental health and for the success of your job search.

Rejection letters and other disappointments happen in any job search. The keys to handling them constructively are:

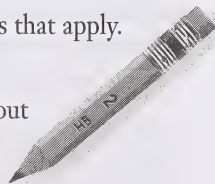
- realistic expectations about how long the search will take,
- a willingness to learn from your experiences, and
- a healthy, balanced life style.

When you get a rejection letter, read it carefully to see if it contains any clues about why you didn't get the job. If it does, you can learn from it. **Everyone** gets rejected sometime. It's what you do with the rejection - how you handle it, and use it to your advantage - that makes all the difference.

Handling Rejection

If you are feeling rejected now, check the following statements that apply. Then read the appropriate responses.

- 1. You hoped you would get work a lot sooner, and without doing the work outlined in Chapters 1 and 2.
- 2. Your application did not make it past the "paper screening" stage - you were not invited for an interview.
- 3. You have not found many suitable job openings so you were really counting on this one.
- 4. Your job interview did not go as well as you had hoped it would.



- 5. You really thought you had this one in the bag so you stopped looking for other job leads.
- 6. You got an interview, it seemed to go well, and you have no idea why someone else got the job.
- 7. You are fed up and ready to give up.

**A job search
mistake is a
failure only if
you don't learn
from it.**

1. If you have found work relatively easily in the past, your expectations for this job search may have been unrealistic for today's tough job market. Fortunately, it's never too late to put some serious effort into getting a clear picture of your work objective and using the most effective methods to find suitable work opportunities.
2. There are two possible reasons you weren't invited for an interview.
 - (a) you don't have the qualifications the employer was looking for, or
 - (b) your application did not communicate that you have the desired qualifications.

The most direct way to find out which of these two reasons applies in your case is to ask the employer. Try to put your disappointment behind you and make this a learning experience. Pick up the phone and explain to the employer that you are trying to improve your job search skills and would like some feedback on your application. You have nothing to lose and you could get some very valuable advice.

If the employer explains that you don't have the desired qualifications, it may be that you need to research the qualifications required for job openings more carefully before applying. Use networking and contacting employers directly to find the work you are qualified for.

If the employer seems to think that you don't have the desired qualifications (but you do), don't argue with him or her. Ask for suggestions about how you can communicate your qualifications more effectively in future applications.

3. If you have not found many suitable work opportunities, there are two possibilities to consider.
 - (a) There are very few jobs that satisfy your work objective.
 - (b) You need to put even more effort into finding suitable opportunities.

Before you assume that (a) is the case, be honest with yourself about how much real time and effort you have put into networking, contacting employers

and other methods of finding work opportunities. If you can honestly say you have researched the possibilities well, you may have to broaden your work objective. Talk to a career or employment counsellor, or someone whose judgement you respect about your situation.

4. Review the questions at the end of Chapter 3 to help you identify why your interview did not go well.

Unfortunately, all the preparation in the world won't get you the job if the "chemistry" between you and the interviewer just isn't right. When this happens, talk to an understanding friend about it. Expressing your frustration can help you to put the experience behind you.

5. No matter how promising a prospect looks, don't stop looking for other possibilities until you have an offer on paper. There are too many things that can go wrong between a tentative verbal offer and an official written offer.

If you have learned this tough lesson the hard way, pick up the threads of your job search as quickly as you can.

6. When there are a number of well-qualified applicants applying for the same job, employers have to make some very difficult decisions. The differences between successful applicants and unsuccessful ones may be very small and hard to define.

Try to find out what could make *you* the successful applicant next time. Telephone the interviewer. Ask him or her to help you improve your job search skills by giving you feedback on your interview. Make sure the interviewer understands that you are not considering legal action to appeal the competition, you're just trying to be better prepared for your next interview.

7. Frustration and discouragement can sink any job search. Let go of your negative feelings. Focus on what you *can* control, not on what you are powerless to change.

If you are feeling really discouraged and can't seem to shake the feeling, it's time to talk to a professional counsellor. Contact the nearest Alberta Career Development Centre, Canada-Employment Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association office, or look in the *Yellow Pages* under "Employment Counselling" to find suitable nonprofit organizations that may offer services to help you.

Staying Positive

There are a variety of things you can do to help you cope with the “ups” and “downs” that everyone experiences in a job search. Learning to handle rejection constructively is one. Several other strategies are outlined below. If you can think of other methods of coping that have helped you through stressful times in the past, add them to the list and use them this time too!

We all need a little help from our friends from time to time, and job seeking is often one of those times.

TIPS FOR STAYING POSITIVE

- 1. Take good care of yourself.** Eat well-balanced meals regularly, and get plenty of rest. Exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Ten minutes on the move can make a world of difference to how you feel.

Schedule regular breaks in your day and take them. Make your breaks short, but get away from your job search completely for a while.
- 2. Seek out people who can give you emotional support.** Tell family members and friends about what you are doing and how things are going. They may be worried about how the changes in your life will affect them. Keeping the lines of communication open will help them too.

If your family members or friends are interested, let them help you by brainstorming ideas with you, networking for you, and reacting to draft applications and résumés.

You may have to cut back on your expenses, but continue as normal a social life as you can.

Contact the nearest Alberta Career Development Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre. Ask about job search workshops or job clubs operating in your area. Or, make an appointment to speak with an employment or career counsellor.

- 3. Set realistic short-term goals, and reward yourself** when you achieve them. For example, decide how many direct contacts (in person, over the telephone, by mail) you should be able to make each day.

Make a list of things that make you feel good, but don't cost too much in time or preparation (for example, a longer walk than usual with the dog). Use these activities as rewards when you have achieved the day's objectives.

4. **Set a time limit on how long you will allow yourself to feel “down,”** preferably no more than a few hours. Then start working your way back up again.
5. **Keep growing.** Do lots of reading on current technological trends, and subjects related to your work or areas of interest. Take short courses, and attend conferences and seminars. If they might be helpful to you, read books or attend workshops on time management, problem-solving, communication, self-esteem, relaxation, positive thinking.
6. **Help others.** Get a better perspective on your own troubles by reaching out to others. Do volunteer work that will make use of your skills, give you needed experience, or allow you to meet people who could be helpful in your job search.
7. **Take temporary or part-time work** to help keep your spirits up, as well as provide short-term income. If your employers are impressed with your performance, they may offer you full-time work or pass on information about work opportunities they hear about.

The one major disadvantage to taking temporary or part-time work is that it decreases the amount of time and energy you can devote to your job search. Only you can decide if the advantages outweigh this disadvantage in your case.

8. **Be kind to yourself.** Listen to your self-talk. If you catch yourself thinking “I can’t...,” “I’m no good at...,” “It’s impossible...,” STOP. Try to reframe your thoughts and think in more positive terms. For example, “I can learn from this mistake” instead of “I’m such a fool.”
9. **Read every flattering thing** (letter of praise, recommendation, performance appraisal) you have ever received. Keep them handy and periodically read them again.
10. **Make a list of the things that worry you and brainstorm solutions** with a friend or counsellor.
11. **Keep laughter in your life.** What makes you laugh? Cartoons? Recordings of comics? Certain types of television shows? Being with certain friends? Laughter is a wonderful release so use it as often as you can.

Add your own ideas for staying positive during your job search.

**Keep refining
your job search
strategy and
improving your
job search tools
to make your
job search
as short as
possible.**

Dealing With Job Loss

Losing your job, especially when you didn't see it coming, can be a very real blow emotionally. Not everyone reacts to job loss the same way, but many people experience the following stages of grief:

1. denial of the situation and a tendency to act as though nothing has happened.
2. anger directed both at yourself and at your employer.
3. attempts to reverse the decision by bargaining (for example, "Maybe I could take a pay cut or move to another position in the company").
4. depression when bargaining doesn't work.
5. acceptance of the fact that the job is gone, and growing enthusiasm for the coming job search.

Some people experience all of these stages within hours, others spend longer on different stages.

Research suggests that the emotional roller coaster ride will probably continue after you have accepted the loss of your job. It's normal to experience emotional "peaks" and "valleys" as you progress through a job search.

Try to level off emotionally by preparing yourself for a job search that will take six months or longer. If you get a job sooner than that, great. If you don't, you are prepared for the long haul and are less likely to become really depressed.

If you ever get to the point that your "lows" just seem to keep getting lower, seek out a professional counsellor. Reach out to organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association to find the services you need.

Wrapping Up The Search

W

hen you get a job offer, it is tempting to jump and shout **YES. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.** But hold on.

Think about the advantages and disadvantages of accepting the job. Then discuss terms of employment (hours, salary, benefits) with the employer **before** you accept the job.

TO ACCEPT OR NOT TO ACCEPT

When you are deciding whether or not to accept a job offer, run through the following checklist of questions.

- Did you like the “feel” of the place when you went for an interview? Why, or why not?
- Would the duties be interesting and satisfying for you?
- Would you be satisfied with the salary, working conditions and benefits?
- Would the job bring you closer to your career goals?
- Is the employer solid financially and in a good competitive position in the industry?
- Do the potential rewards in accepting the job outweigh the risks?
- Is it short-term work or a permanent position? If short term or temporary, will this provide an opportunity to gain experience in the industry or position yourself for a future longer term role with the company or industry?
- Can you get transportation to the workplace?
- Do you have other promising-looking applications in progress?
- How badly do you need the job?



You don't have to accept the job or turn it down right away. If you need to think it over, ask for some time to make a decision. Let the employer know that you are very interested in the offer, and when to expect a definite answer.

Terms of Employment

If you have questions or concerns about the terms of employment, talk them over with the employer before you accept the position. You have no room to bargain if you have already accepted the job! Make it clear that you are interested in the job, but you would like to discuss a few things before accepting the offer.

Unless you are desperate, **don't accept a salary below market rate.** Employers will slot you in as low as you will go. But they will also see you as a less valuable employee if you undervalue your work.

Organizations base salaries on what they have to pay to attract and keep competent employees, not on their "worth."

If you know the standard salary range for this type of work, present those numbers and state that you want to be paid the market rate for your work.

If you don't know the standard salary range, do some research - find out what the minimum and maximum salaries are for similar jobs in other organizations. Talk to people in the industry: other employers, employees, personnel officers. Check with government and unionized company personnel departments, appropriate associations, and employment or post-secondary institution counsellors. Your local librarian may also be able to help you locate wage and salary figures.

The "benefits" offered may influence the minimum salary you are prepared to accept. For example, you may be able to accept a lower wage if the employer

- supplies uniforms or transportation,
- subsidizes the company cafeteria, fitness centre or day care facility, or
- regularly offers opportunities to work overtime at an increased wage rate.

Find out what terms of employment are negotiable. If your job is covered by a union agreement, most terms of employment are set by the agreement. If there is no applicable union contract, you may be able to negotiate

- a job review and salary increase after six months on the job,
- health and/or dental insurance coverage,
- cost-of-living raises or merit raises,
- an extra week of holiday time,
- a parking stall,
- a different job title, or
- more varied responsibilities.

Try to be as objective as possible. Expensive “perks” like company cars come only with years of proven success.

After You Have Reached A Decision

If you decide to turn a job offer down, be tactful and express your appreciation for the offer.

If you decide to accept a job offer, show your enthusiasm about beginning the job. If you have negotiated any special terms of employment, they should be included in a written job offer. In your letter of acceptance, express how pleased you are to join the organization and confirm the terms of employment.

If you are employed, submit a letter of resignation to your current employer. Word your letter tactfully and give your employer reasonable notice - you may need a good reference some day.

There are just two more things to do before you can consider your job search “wrapped up,” at least for the time being.

1. Let your references and contacts know that you have accepted a position, and thank them for their help.
2. Let employers know that you have accepted a position if you have talked to them recently or submitted applications to them.

MAKE YOUR NEXT JOB SEARCH EASIER

Odds are, you will conduct several job searches in your lifetime. Make the next one easier!

- Keep your résumé up to date.
- Keep a file folder of notes and things like letters of appreciation and performance appraisals to remind you of your accomplishments and skills.
- Stay in touch with valuable network members.
- Make it a habit to anticipate the effects that changes in the economy and your workplace will have on your chosen field of work.

Planning ahead and taking charge of your career can give you a sense of confidence and freedom that goes well beyond ordinary job security.

Appendix: Sample Résumés and Covering Letters

T

he following descriptions of three fictitious job seekers illustrate how you can develop effective résumés and covering letters by

- first, identifying your work objective;
- second, identifying the skills you have developed through previous training and experience; and
- third, selecting the skills that relate to your work objective and emphasizing those skills in your résumé and covering letter.

Ann, Dan and Tracey represent three typical job search situations.

Ann is looking for work in a new occupation.

Dan is unemployed and looking for work in his field.

Tracey is a recent graduate looking for a work in the field she has trained for.

Ann

After the birth of her first child in 1983, Ann took a part-time job as a waitress. Waitressing worked out reasonably well because Ann enjoyed serving customers, her husband could usually babysit while she worked evenings and weekends, and she often earned a fair amount in tips.

In 1988, Ann's husband got a new job and they moved from Calgary to Lethbridge. Ann applied for and got a part-time job at a day care located near her new home. It allowed her to be near her younger children while she was working.

Now, Ann's family circumstances have changed drastically and she must find work that pays better. From her experience as a waitress, she knows that she is good at serving people. She has heard that some supermarkets pay cashiers very well and supply uniforms as well (which would reduce the amount she has to spend on clothing).

Ann has begun preparing to apply for a cashier position by taking stock of her skills. She has listed her work-related experiences, both paid and unpaid, and identified the skills she used and developed through each experience. Following is a list of the skills she identified for two of her experiences.

PAID EMPLOYMENT AS A WAITRESS

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Greeting, assisting and being courteous to customers.	communicating explaining memorizing using tact being flexible enthusiastic self-controlled
Taking orders.	attending to details following procedures
Serving food and beverages.	remembering coordinating attending to details serving working under pressure energetic/alert efficient
Placing orders and working with other employees.	cooperating organizing
Accepting payments and making change.	following procedures calculating being accurate demonstrating integrity

WORKING AS A HOMEMAKER

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Setting up and managing the family budget.	keeping records/calculating estimating planning investigating/researching budgeting

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Planning and preparing meals.	planning following procedures improvising experimenting adapting efficient
Doing routine cleaning and laundry.	sorting organizing performing repetitive tasks persistent
Planning family activities.	negotiating planning organizing
General home maintenance.	building/constructing operating adjusting fixing/repairing
Home decorating.	planning visualizing/imagining designing/displaying
Parenting.	communicating teaching caring negotiating counselling

Ann knows from years of experience buying groceries that cashiers in supermarkets must be able to serve the public courteously and work efficiently at the same time. These are skills she has and therefore wants to highlight.

Ann wrote both a chronological résumé and a combination résumé to see which format would present her skills best. Which résumé do you think she chose to include with the covering letter she wrote to the manager of her local supermarket?

ANN'S CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Ann McKinney
1456 Taylor Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1K 4X7
Telephone: 320-3976

Seeking a supermarket cashier position.

OBJECTIVE:

WORK EXPERIENCE

1988-Present
Part-time

Day Care Worker

Alicia's Day Care, Lethbridge

- Greet children and parents as they arrive, supervise free play, serve lunch and snacks, and clean up.
- Plan, organize and supervise games, crafts and other learning activities as part of a team responsible for 40 children aged 2 to 4 years.

1983-1988
Part-time

Waitress

Good Fortune Cafe, Deerfoot Trail, Calgary

- Greeted customers and presented menus, helped customers select menu items, and placed orders with the kitchen.
- Served food and beverages for up to 12 table at a time.
- Prepared itemized bills and accepted payment.

1980-1983

Dietary Aide

General Hospital, Calgary

- Assembled patient food trays, delivered trays to wards, and operated dishwasher.

Summer
1979

Server

B&G Fast Food, Grosvenor Road S.W., Calgary

- Entered customer food orders on computerized cash register, assembled food orders, accepted payment and made change.

EDUCATION

Completed Grade 12 at Coronation High School in Calgary, 1980.
Courses included English 33, Typing 20 and Business Procedures 10.

PERSONAL

Excellent health, available to work flexible hours.
Active member of the Hillcrest Community League and the Southside Bowling Club.

References

Available upon request.



ANN'S COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

ANN MCKINNEY

1456 Taylor Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 4X7 Phone: 320-3976

OBJECTIVE: A supermarket cashier position.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Five years of experience serving food and beverages in a busy restaurant. Efficiently and courteously served up to 12 tables at a time.
- Nine years of experience supervising children and responding to parental concerns in a day care setting.
- Grade 12 education including English 33, Typing 20 and Business Procedures 10.
- Volunteer experience tabulating monies at community bingos and operating concession booths for various charitable organizations.

WORK HISTORY

Day Care Worker, Alicia's Day Care, Lethbridge,
1988 to the present, part-time.

- Greet children and parents as they arrive, supervise free play, serve lunch and snacks, and clean up.
- Plan, organize and supervise games, crafts and other learning activities as part of a team responsible for 40 children aged 2 to 4 years.

Waitress, Good Fortune Cafe, Deerfoot Trail, Calgary
1983 - 88, part-time.

- Greeted customers and presented menus, helped customers select menu items, and placed orders with the kitchen.
- Served food and beverages.
- Prepared itemized bills and accepted payment.

Dietary Aid, General Hospital, Calgary,
1980 - 83.

- Assembled patient food trays, delivered trays to wards, and operated dishwasher.

Server, B&G Fast Food, Grosvenor Road S.W., Calgary,
Summer 1979.

- Entered customer food orders on computerized cash register, assembled food orders, accepted payment and made change.

REFERENCES: Available upon request.

ANN'S COVERING LETTER

1456 Taylor Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1K 4X7
May 13, 1997

Mr. Don Cameron, Manager
Riteway Foods
456 Main Street
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1K 7G4

Dear Mr. Cameron:


Rita Stobbe, my neighbour and a Riteway Foods employee, suggested that I contact you. I would like to be considered for any cashier positions that may become available.

My experience as a waitress has taught me how to deal pleasantly and efficiently with customers, even when working under pressure. I take pride in being able to remember items and prices, and handle cash with a high degree of accuracy. The enclosed résumé briefly describes my experience and education.

I am available to work flexible hours including evenings and weekends.

I am very interested in becoming a cashier and would like to meet with you to discuss the possibilities. I will call you on May 22 in the hope that we can arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,



Ann McKinney

Encl.

Dan

Dan is a journeyman electrician who, as a foreman on his last job, travelled throughout Alberta to oversee numerous projects. Dan's sharp wit and ability to get along with others was admired by his co-workers and boss. Dan was responsible for submitting quotes, setting up a site, organizing duties, controlling quality, and completing a project on schedule. He has been unemployed for the past three months.

Dan is married and has three children. During the past year, as a result of questions his daughter asked about the family history, Dan became interested in genealogy. He has interviewed older relatives, obtained copies of birth and death records from Bureaus of Statistics in Ontario and Alberta, and contacted distant relatives in Europe. For the past few years, Dan has also been involved in refereeing PeeWee hockey.

Following is a list of some of the activities involved in two of Dan's accomplishments, and the skills he used in them.

PAID EMPLOYMENT AS AN ELECTRICAL FOREMAN

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Supervising /overseeing the work of other electricians.	explaining making decisions directing/supervising initiating confronting using tact understanding
Submitting quotes.	calculating measuring estimating reasoning with numbers writing
Setting up a worksite.	directing/supervising planning organizing

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Organizing duty assignments.	making decisions planning/organizing analyzing
Ensuring quality control.	being precise/being alert attending to details verifying demonstrating integrity
Ensuring that deadlines are met.	directing/supervising working under pressure efficient dependable/persistent

WORKING ON A FAMILY TREE

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Planning and organizing tasks to be done.	planning/organizing enthusiastic takes pride in performance
Interviewing relatives.	questioning/investigating researching
Researching sources of information: family records, archives, etc.	attending to details reading/writing investigating/researching perseverance
Analyzing and organizing the information obtained.	record keeping sorting/writing organizing/analyzing

A municipal electrical inspector position has been advertised in the Grande Prairie newspaper. Dan would enjoy working as an inspector and would definitely prefer to find work in Grande Prairie. To be effective, Dan's application must communicate how his experience as a foreman applies to the position of electrical inspector.

Following are two résumés, one in a chronological format and one in a combination format, and a covering letter for Dan's response to the newspaper ad.

DAN'S CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

DAN BUSWELL
16532 - 101 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8V 4M7
(403) 539-1794

WORK EXPERIENCE

1980 - 1997

M&G Construction, Grande Prairie

Foreman (1986 - 1997)

- inspected all electrical work both while under way and upon completion.
- supervised electricians installing and testing electrical apparatus, fixtures and controls for chemical and gas plants.
- submitted quotes, set up work sites, and organized duty assignments.
- ensured that all codes and standards were met, and that projects were completed on time and within budget.

Electrician (1980 - 1986)

- working from specifications and electrical, mechanical or architectural drawings, installed electrical fixtures, wiring, and signal equipment in commercial and industrial complexes under construction.
- demonstrated a working knowledge of the Canadian Electrical Code as well as provincial and municipal rules and regulations for safe electrical installation while working on a variety of projects located throughout Alberta.

1978 - 1980

Allied Construction, Edmonton

Electrician

- installed electrical wiring, fixtures, and controls during the construction of residential housing units and small commercial units such as strip malls.
- completed apprenticeship training requirements for Journeyman Certification.

1975 - 1978

Ronco Construction, Edmonton

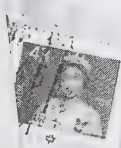
Apprentice Electrician

- worked on residential wiring, fixtures and controls both for new homes under construction and for renovations.

1969 - 1975

Acme Pipeline, Grande Prairie

Labourer



DAN'S CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ (continued)

2

CERTIFICATES

Master Electrician Certificate awarded by
Electrical Protection Branch, Alberta Labour, 1984.
Electrician Journeyman Certificate of Proficiency and
Interprovincial Red Seal awarded by
Alberta Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, 1979.
Completed Grade 12 at Allendale High School
in Grande Prairie.

FURTHER EDUCATION

various courses through
Grande Prairie Regional College, 1985 - 1989 including
Business Communications
Introduction to Computers in Business
Introduction to Management

INTERESTS

Referee PeeWee hockey.
Currently working on genealogical research.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

DAN'S COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

DAN BUSWELL
16532 - 101 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8V 4M7
(403) 539-1794

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 18 years of experience as an electrician and electrical foreman working with electrical inspectors during and upon completion of industrial, commercial and residential projects.
- Proven ability to communicate requirements and gain the cooperation of others.
- Experienced in writing reports and other submissions.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Master Electrician Certificate** awarded by Electrical Protection Branch, Alberta Labour, 1984.
- **Electrician Journeyman Certificate of Proficiency and Interprovincial Red Seal** awarded by Alberta Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, 1979.
- Graduated from Grade 12 at Allendale High School in Grande Prairie, 1969.
- Various courses related to Administration completed at Grande Prairie Regional College, 1985 - 1989, including Business Communications, Introduction to Computers in Business, and Introduction to Management.

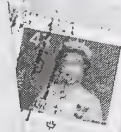
EXPERIENCE

Quality Control

- Demonstrated good working knowledge of Canadian Electrical Codes as well as provincial and municipal rules and regulations on construction projects located throughout Alberta.
- Ensured that all electrical codes and regulations, as well as safety procedures, were followed as part of my responsibilities as an electrical foreman for the past five years.

Communication Skills

- Instructed apprentices, supervised electrical installations, and coordinated work with other foremen and supervisors.
- Submitted quotes and wrote progress reports.
- Interviewed people and made numerous enquiries, both written and verbal, in an ongoing effort to develop a family tree.



DAN'S COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

(continued)

2

WORK HISTORY

Foreman and Electrician (Industrial), M&G Construction, Grande Prairie, from 1980 to 1997.

Electrician (Residential and Commercial), Allied Construction, Edmonton, from 1978 to 1980.

Apprentice Electrician, Ronco Construction, Edmonton, from 1975 to 1978.

Labourer, Acme Pipeline, Grande Prairie, from 1969 to 1975.

INTERESTS

Referee PeeWee hockey.
Currently working on genealogical research.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

DAN'S COVERING LETTER

16532 - 101 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta
TSV 4M7
July 4, 1997

R.C. Jacobson, Director
Electrical Inspection Branch
City of Grande Prairie
Box 2323
Grande Prairie, Alberta
TSV 4Z3

Dear Ms. Jacobson:

I am very pleased to respond to your advertisement regarding the City Electrical Inspector position (competition #37539). Throughout my 18 years of experience as an Electrician and Electrical Foreman, I have demonstrated a sound knowledge of electrical codes and regulations and their application on residential, industrial and commercial construction projects.

As an electrical foreman, I have particularly enjoyed those aspects of the work that involve dealing with people. I would welcome the increased people-contact that being an electrical inspector would bring. The business and administration courses I have taken and my experience writing reports would also apply directly to this position.

Please find my résumé enclosed. If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 539-1794.

Sincerely,

Dan Buswell

Dan Buswell

Encl.

TRACEY

Tracey is 20 years old, single and a recent graduate of the two-year Law Enforcement and Security program at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton. She would like to become a police officer in the RCMP or in a municipal police department in Alberta. However, Tracey realizes that there are a limited number of places to apply and that she may not get a job immediately. Therefore, she has decided to apply for “loss prevention” (security) positions with major retailers as well.

To begin preparing résumés for her two job objectives, Tracey analyzed the skills she has developed through her training and previous work experience. Following is a sample list of the activities involved in two of Tracey’s accomplishments and the skills she had to use and develop to perform those activities.

CORPORAL IN THE MILITIA

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Basic Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working as part of a team tolerating discomfort physically fit disciplined dependable self-reliant
Artillery Trades Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operating computerized equipment acting quickly and decisively handling weapons safely administering first aid observing closely following procedures calculating tolerating discomfort working under pressure responding to feedback demonstrating self-control using caution being precise taking risks remaining alert taking pride in performance

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Leadership Training	making decisions directing/supervising confronting organizing explaining teaching/training speaking in public confident

LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Activities	Skills/Characteristics
Subjects Covered in the Program	securing a crime scene gathering evidence conducting security surveys enforcing traffic laws dealing with young offenders dealing with the mentally ill federal and provincial statutes forensic science enforcement techniques police administration computers physical fitness
Field Placement Experience	observing enforcement and court procedures and techniques establishing good working relationships writing reports

Tracey has decided to use a chronological résumé when she is applying for police officer positions. She does not include a job objective statement in this résumé because her covering letter clearly states her objective.

Tracey uses a combination résumé when she is applying for loss prevention positions. In this résumé, she includes a job objective statement and highlights her security-related experience.

The sample covering letter is one she uses to “network” to find opportunities for work in the loss prevention field.

TRACEY'S CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Tracey Kozuchowski
Box 359
WETASKIWIN, Alberta
T9A 2G6
(403) 352-8167

EDUCATION

1995 - 1997

Law Enforcement and Security Diploma
Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton

- courses included Securing a Crime Scene, Traffic Enforcement, Forensic Science, Enforcement Techniques, and Young Persons in Conflict with the Law.
- refined my observation, communication, enforcement and report writing skills during six months (16 hours per week) of field placement experience with the City of Edmonton Police Force.
- achieved an overall 3.1 grade point average.

1989 - 1992

High School Diploma
Alexander Composite High School, Wetaskiwin

WORK EXPERIENCE

1992 - 1995
Summer and
Part-time

15th Field Battery R.C.A., Edmonton

- completed basic training, artillery trades training, and junior leadership training in the militia.
- demonstrated an ability to work with a variety of people at all levels, take charge when required, handle weapons, and deal with emergencies.
- achieved rank of Corporal.

Summer 1991

Vivid Video Shop, Wetaskiwin

- monitored in-house goods and facilities security system.
- served customers with courtesy and respect, accepted payments and operated cash register, stocked shelves, and took inventory.

WORK EXPERIENCE
Continued

1990-1991
Part-time

Wetaskiwin General Hospital, Wetaskiwin

- supervised hospital parking lot.
- enforced safety and hospital regulations, issued time cards and accepted customer payments.
- reported incidents of theft, property damage and vehicle abandonment.

PERSONAL

Excellent health, bondable, valid Alberta Class 5 Driver's License with a clean driving record.

Captain of my high school basketball team.

Coach little league baseball.

REFERENCES:

Available upon request.

TRACEY'S COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

Tracey Kozuchowski
Box 359
WETASKIWIN, Alberta
T9A 2G6
(403) 352-8167

OBJECTIVE: A loss prevention position using my skills, training and experience in law enforcement, working with people, report writing, and safety and first aid.

EDUCATION

Law Enforcement and Security Diploma
Grant MacEwan Community College, 1997.

- Courses included Security Survey, Security Emergency Planning, Computers, Young Persons in Conflict with the Law, and Securing Crime Scenes.
- Achieved an overall 3.1 grade point average.

High School Diploma
Alexander Composite High School, Wetaskiwin, 1992.

EXPERIENCE

Enforcement

- Enforced safety and hospital regulations with tact and courtesy while employed as a parking lot attendant.
- Monitored in-house goods and facilities security system in a retail outlet.
- Learned self-defense and weapons handling techniques while in the militia.
- Observed law enforcement and courtroom activities of Edmonton police officers during six month field placement (16 hours per week).

Working With People

- Commended by employer for serving customers well and maintaining productive work relationships while employed in a video store.
- Worked cooperatively with a variety of people, dealt with mock emergency situations, and assumed a leadership role as required while in the militia.
- Captain of my high school basketball team and coach for little league baseball.

Report Writing

- Wrote reports both in the militia and during field placement with the City of Edmonton Police Force.

Safety and First Aid

- Followed safety procedures and administered first aid as required in the militia.
- Instructed artillerymen in weapons handling and safety procedures.
- Hold a valid Standard First Aid Certificate.

WORK HISTORY

Corporal, 15th Field Battery R.C.A., Edmonton, summer and part-time from 1990 to 1992.

Store Clerk, Vivid Video Shop, Wetaskiwin, summer of 1991.

Parking Lot Attendant, Wetaskiwin General Hospital, summer of 1990 and part-time 1990-1991.

REFERENCES

Sgt. Gordon Kimball
15th Field Battery R.C.A.
Box 526
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 5Z4
(403) 456-9548

Bryan Lee, Instructor
Law Enforcement Program
Grant MacEwan Community College
10045 - 156 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5P 2P7
(403) 483-4321

Ms. Mona Mottershead
Vivid Video Shop
509 Main Street
Wetaskiwin, Alberta
T9A 5X2
(403) 352-1794

Mrs. E. Rudyk, Principal
Alexander Composite High School
Wetaskiwin, Alberta
T9A 7N3
(403) 352-7377

TRACEY'S ELECTRONIC CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Note: Use sans serif (no cross-lines) typeface such as Univers or Helvetica in 10-14 points.
Your name must be the first line on the résumé

Tracey Kozuchowski
Box 359
WETASKIWIN, Alberta
T9A 2G6
(403) 352-8167

SUMMARY:

Law Enforcement Diploma. Grant MacEwan Community College.
Police Force. Electronic Security Systems. Surveillance. Retail. Military.
Hospital. Self-defence. Emergency Procedures. Crime Prevention.
Conflict Resolution. Customer Service. Safety Procedures. Firearms.
Weapon Handling. Marksmen. Instructor. Driver. Class 5 License.
Clean Abstract. Own Vehicle. Bondable. First Aid Certificate. Coach.
Leader. Physically Fit. Excellent Health. English Language.

EDUCATION

1995 -1997

Law Enforcement and Security Diploma Grant MacEwan Community College

- courses included Securing a Crime Scene, Traffic Enforcement, Forensic Science, Enforcement Techniques, and Young Persons in Conflict with the Law.
- refined my observation, communication, enforcement and report writing skills during six-months (16 hours per week) of field placement experience with the City of Edmonton Police Force.
- achieved an overall 3.1 grade point average.

1989 - 1992

High School Diploma Alexander Composite High School, Wetaskiwin

WORK EXPERIENCE

1992 - 1995

15th Field Artillery R.C.A., Edmonton Summer and Part-time

- completed basic training, artillery trades training, and junior leadership training in the militia.
- demonstrated an ability to work with a variety of people at all levels, take charge when required, handle weapons, and deal with emergencies
- achieved rank of Corporal

WORK EXPERIENCE
Continued

2

Summer 1991

Vivid Video Shop,
Wetaskiwin

- monitored in-house goods and facilities security system
- served customers with courtesy and respect, accepted payments and operated cash register, stocked shelves, and took inventory

1990 - 1991

Wetaskiwin General Hospital,
Wetaskiwin (Part-time)

- supervised hospital parking lot
- enforced safety and hospital regulations, issued time cards and accepted customer payments.
- reported incidents of theft, property damage and vehicle abandonment

PERSONAL

Excellent health, bondable, valid Alberta Class 5 Driver's License with a clean driving record.
Captain, high school basketball team.
Coach, little league baseball.

REFERENCES

Available on request.

TRACEY'S COVERING LETTER

Box 359
Wetaskiwin, Alberta
T9A 2G6
June 9, 1997

Mr. William Dickson, Supervisor
Loss Prevention
Big B Department Store
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 3K2

Dear Mr. Dickson:

As a recent graduate of the Law Enforcement and Security Diploma program at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton, I was very interested in reading a recent article about your firm in the Enforcement newsletter. Your approach to loss prevention sounds both innovative and practical.

I am writing to ask for your advice and assistance in my search for a full-time position in the loss prevention field. If you are aware of positions that are currently available or may become available in the near future, I would certainly appreciate hearing about them. Central Alberta would be my preferred location, but I am willing to relocate anywhere in Alberta.

My training included an extensive field placement with the City of Edmonton Police Department. My work experience includes two and half years in the militia where I learned to work effectively with a variety of people, to defend myself, and to deal with emergency situations and administer first aid. I have enclosed my résumé to give you a more complete picture of my background.

I will be in Red Deer in two weeks time and will call you then. Any information you can provide about current or future job openings would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your consideration.

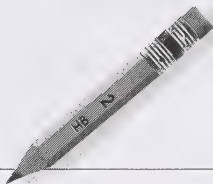
Sincerely,

Tracey Kozuchowski

Tracey Kozuchowski

Encl.

We'd Like To Hear From You



Job Seeker's Handbook

Date _____



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